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LEATHER STOCKING AND SILK;

OR,

HUNTER JOHN MYERS AND HIS TIMES.

A STORY OF

THE VALLEY OF VIRGINIA.

NEW YORK:

HARPER & BROTHERS, PUBLISHERS,

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FRANKLIN SQUARE.

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TO THE READER.

IN this little tale the writer has attempted to sketch in outline, some of the personages, and modes of life and thought in Virginia, at the commencement of the present century. The chief character, who gives his name to the book, and around whom the other actors group themselves, had like many of the rest a real existence, and is drawn with as near an approach to life in personal and characteristic traits, as the writer found it possible. One who knew him well, testifies to the accuracy of the delineation in all its material points.

It is only necessary to add, that the story is 'sunny rather than gloomy—comedy rather than tragedy;—dealing rather with peculiarities and humors, than with those profound passions of the soul which excite so terrible an interest in the reader. If the book be found entertaining, and (above all else) the spirit of it pure, the writer will be more than satisfied.

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LEATHER STOCKING AND SILK.

PART I.

IN THE TOWN OF MARTINSBURG.

CHAPTER I.

OLD MARTINSBURG.

THE antique character implied by the term *old* has passed away from Martinsburg. It is now a busy, bustling town, which daily raises its two thousand heads and hushes its two thousand tongues to listen to the shrill steam-whistle of the cars: but even this event, which in the old time would have furnished so much food for neighborly gossip, and street-corner harangues attracts attention but for a moment. The hurry, the bustle, the healthy activity which spring from trade, and announce prosperity, commence:—and Martinsburg, thus absorbed in her joyful present, scarcely ever gives a thought to her past.

That past was as picturesque as the present is prosaic: not only the manners and personages, but the town itself.

Standing on the hill to the southward, you had before you a long unpaved street—Queen-street—which crossed a low stone arch, ascended the rugged hill, and was lost with its numerous trees and old mansions in the distance. The stone arch—for it could scarcely be called a

bridge—spanned a broad ravine which in the summer and fall was bright with waving corn, and tall grass: through this ravine, and under the arch, a little stream gurgled over rocks covered with moss and saxifrages.

To the left was the church which had seen the men and dames of ante-revolutionary days, and given a resting place to many stately characters of long past generations:—across the ravine was the German quarter of the town, its substantial wooden houses half concealed by the foliage from which light smoke-wreaths curled upward against the blue background of the mountains and the sky.

There was about the town in those days a thoughtful, slumbrous quietude, which was very striking to such travelers as stopped there: more especially if among such travelers there were any artists armed with their sketch books. All day long the atmosphere brooded like a dreamless slumber upon the quiet borough, and the only sound that never died away was the sighing of the willows, which stretching down their long arms to the stream unceasingly complained to the waves. All day long the air was stirred by no other sound, unless it were the sudden roar of the rock-blaster's mine echoing along the stone-fenced valley. No stranger, except at long intervals, made the stony street resound with hoof-strokes; no cur ran barking at the pedestrian's heels. Such horsemen and pedestrians were seldom seen—and the curs had got out of practice. The cloud-shadows floated across the streets, the tall old willows sighed and rustled, the corn tassels waved their silky fibres in the gentle lazy breeze: and Martinsburg might have sat for a sketch of Drowsy-land.

Our story relates to this *old* Martinsburg—this land of the *dolce far niente*—which is so completely a thing of the past. But not wholly. The town was at the period when these veritable events occurred, in the transition

state. The habitudes and fashions—in costume, modes of thought, every thing—were changing. The close-shaven and prim expression of our own day and generation had already begun to take the place of the bluff and joyous bearing of the elder time. Powdered heads were going out of fashion with fair-top boots and shoe-buckles and silken hose:—the minuet, that stately divertisement in which those honest old folks our grandfathers and grandmothers took such delight, was slowly disappearing:—stages had commenced running between the towns, thereby realizing the long dreamed of luxury of a weekly mail:—and Martinsburg with her sister boroughs was enlivened from time to time by “professors” of music, dancing, fencing, drawing, all the accomplishments, in a word, which are thought necessary parts of education by the inhabitants of a thriving country town.

It is at this turning point between the old days and the new, when the nineteenth century, very nearly in its teens, began thinking and acting for itself, that our history commences.

CHAPTER II.

INTRODUCES ONE OF THE HEROINES.

ONE of the most comfortable mansions of the German quarter was that of old Jacob Von Horn. It was one of those houses which are eloquent of the past—which tolerate about them nothing modern in character. The building was large, consisting only of two stories, and covered with its out-houses space sufficient for a dozen dwellings of the present day. The massive timbers which formed its walls had once stood, tall woodland monarchs, not far from the door: and in front of the broad portal two giant trees, of the same species, still threw their verdurous bough-arms over the wide roof and around the gables, and brushed against the large chimneys which were clearly relieved against the foliage.

In the large dining-room were an ancient harpsichord; a mighty patriarchal clock; shelves glittering with burnished pewter and gayly colored crockery; a ponderous German-English Bible with silver clasps; and on the rough wall two or three much prized portraits.

One fine morning in early autumn in the year 18—, about an hour after sunrise, the passers by the door of Father Von Horn (so the old German was called) might have seen, had they taken the trouble to look through the window which was open, a much more attractive object than any of those above mentioned. This was Nina, the old man's daughter—seated with the air of a matron behind the large coffee-urn.

Beside her sat a boy of fifteen, with long dark hair, soft tender eyes, and, on his lips, the gentle ingenuous smile of early youth. He was clad in a rough, loosely-fitting roundabout; his collar was thrown open and only confined by a narrow black ribbon, which clearly defined itself against his white throat; and on a chair, near, lay a rustic cap, and two or three school-books.

The boy seemed absorbed in thought, and not unpleasant thought: his large, dreamy eyes were wandering, one would have said, over some fair landscape, beyond the view of mortal vision, far in Fairy-land: in a word, he was in a profound reverie.

The young girl pushed him on the shoulder with one of her small white hands, and said, angrily:

"Come Barry! stop that ridiculous thinking! You'll never be fit for any thing, if you don't give it up. You are positively in a dream."

The boy returned to himself, so to speak, and to the scenes around him, with a laugh and blush.

"I'll try and not do it so much, cousin Nina," he said, "but—"

"There, you are going to say—"

"Only that I—"

"I have told you, Barry, often, that you ought not to interrupt a lady when—"

"O, I won't any more, cousin Nina."

"There, again! Really you are too vexatious. You plague me to death."

Barry seemed hurt at the rough tone in which the young girl spoke.

"I am sorry I plague you, cousin Nina," he said, timidly, "and I know my habit of thinking about all sorts of things is wrong. But I can't help it. I was born so."

"Yes, *born so*! That's every body's excuse," said the girl, curling her pretty lip; "where's aunt Jenny? Aunt Jenny! These servants will run me crazy."

"I'll call her, cousin Nina," said Barry, humbly.

"I don't want you to! Finish your breakfast and go to school!"

"I can not eat any more," said Barry, rising mournfully, "you are angry with me, cousin Nina: I am sorry I offended you."

"Foolishness! who said you offended me?"

"I love you too much to," said Barry.

"Aunt Jenny!" called Nina.

Barry turned away blushing, put on his cap, and took his books.

"Good-by cousin Nina: I hope you are not angry with me. I wouldn't feel easy if I thought you were."

"Barry, you are the most perfectly ridiculous child I ever knew in my life. You imagine that every body is angry with you for something; and I can not say a word to you, but I am *offended* or *angry* or some nonsense. I am out of sorts this morning, and I *am* angry—aunt Jenny!—and if that lazy Mr. Max don't come down in ten minutes, I vow I will lock up every thing. Let him get his breakfast where he can. He is the laziest, idlest—"

"Brother Max sits up studying, cousin."

"Studying!"

"Don't he, cousin?"

"Barry, you'll drive me mad! For heaven's sake go to school, and—"

"Hey, Nina!" said a voice, which voice belonged to a personage who entered at that moment behind the young girl, "there you are, abusing Barry again: now Nina!"

"Not *abusing* me, brother Max," said Barry.

"But I heard, Barry, my boy. I heard that last blast. Now Nina—cousin Nina, and when I say *cousin* Nina, I am on the affectionate key—don't speak so roughly to Barry. He's too timid: pour it out on me—I can stand it all—my nerves are strong."

"Impudence!"

"I impudent!" said Max, with an air of astonishment!

"As you can be!" said the young girl.

"And you—you Nina are—charming. Barry, you rascal, go kiss Nina; and I think I'll have a kiss myself, this morning."

Nina's good-humor seemed to have returned in a measure. She kissed Barry, who came forward timidly: but when Mr. Max offered the same compliment, she seized her cup and threatened to discharge its contents upon him. Max, upon mature consideration, retreated.

"Nina, you are dreadfully cross this morning," he said; "I really thought just now you were going to bite Barry; and now you threaten to scald one of your most devoted admirers."

"Barry is always dreaming, and you—you are—"

"What pray?"

"Always sleeping."

"Sleeping? Good! I the active, the restless! When I am in love I will begin to sleep and dream—not before. Barry never fall in love—it's a losing game, Barry: take my advice and never fall in love, Barry."

Barry blushed and laughed. Then, taking up his cap which had fallen on the floor, he left the room, with an affectionate look toward his brother who sat down yawning.

CHAPTER III.

MAX MAKES A CONFIDANTE OF HIS COUSIN, AND CONSULTS HER ON THE SUBJECT OF HIS COSTUME.

PERHAPS it would be as well before proceeding farther, to convey to the reader a somewhat more distinct impression of the two personages now left alone together.

Nina was a young girl of seventeen, with a profusion of golden curls, very red lips and cheeks, arms of dazzling whiteness, and a figure of undeniable beauty, though a critical eye might have considered it a little—a very little—too *Dutch* in character. Two brilliant orbs full of mischief and sauciness sparkled under their well defined brows, and whenever Nina smiled—which was usually at some unlucky visitor's expense—she displayed a row of snow-white teeth of admirable beauty.

Maximilian Courtlandt, her cousin, was her elder by a year or more, and was not unlike Nina; his hair long, fair, and curling; his features regular, and their expression laughing and full of joyous pride.

We might dwell at some length on the costume of these personages of our tale—costume so different from that of ladies and gentlemen in our own day:—but we refer the reader rather to those portraits, which are found in almost every house of the land. The young girl's dress was plain and elegant, her hair not half as high-raised as was then the fashion, in fact not more than six inches—the heels of her shoes scarcely two inches high. Her cousin was clad, as was usual at the period, in short pantaloons, stockings, a long waistcoat, and stiff-collared coat.

He took his seat at the table, and patiently waited to be addressed. He did not wait long.

"Max," said Nina "you are positively the idlest, most indolent person I have ever known in my life."

Max helped himself to a roll.

"Idle!" he exclaimed.

"Yes; you know you are."

"Nina, you astonish me."

"An hour after breakfast-time! There is the clock!"

"I can't deny that, Nina," said Max with his mouth full, "but you know I was up late last night studying—"

"Studying what?"

"My *Romeo*."

"Oh!" exclaimed the girl.

"And you know they expect great things of me, my darling Nina."

"Max, I'll thank you not to address me as your 'darling,'" the young girl said, pouting, "keep that for Miss Josephine!"

"Josephine! Is it possible, Nina dear, they have told you any nonsense about Josephine?"

"You know you are in love with her!"

Max seemed astonished.

"I in love with her!"

"Yes—do you deny it?"

"Deny it? no, I never deny any thing."

"Don't 'dear' me then, please!" said Nina. "Keep it for those you care for."

"I care more for you, Nina," said Max, "than for any body in the world—a few people excepted."

"I don't believe it."

"And I will prove that to you, Nina," said the young man.

"How?"

"By asking a favor of you."

"A favor?"

"Don't that prove my regard for you?"

"A pretty way! and what is the favor? I warn you beforehand, I shall not grant it."

"Oh yes, you will: for you know Nina," said Max, coaxingly, "you are always so good to me—every body is, for that matter."

"I know how you persuade every body to do what you want by wheedling them; you're the greatest flatterer in the world."

"Flatterer! Have I ever flattered you?"

"A thousand times."

"Just because I said you were the prettiest girl in town, and the wittiest—that's not flattery."

"That is a proof you don't flatter, I suppose," said Nina, laughing, in spite of herself.

"Ah, there is the proper expression back again: now for my favor."

"I shall refuse it."

"Very well—listen first."

"Go on."

"You know they have applied to me to act *Romeo and Juliet* at Mrs. ——'s school next Thursday—Commencement."

"I have heard something of it."

"Heard something of it! Just listen. When all the town is agog on the subject, and talking—"

"Of Mr. Max Courtlandt and Miss Sally Myers."

"Well—hum," said Max, with a conceited air, "suppose they do talk of us. But we are getting away from the favor you can do for me. It is necessary I should have, in order to act *Romeo* properly—and oh, Nina! I shall throw such expression, such melancholy, into the part—"

"Who is 'getting away' now?"

"I am, I confess: but you know when uncle took me to Philadelphia I saw the play, and I think I shall act it

well. But I must have a dress. Now a dress consists of three things."

"Does it?"

"I will particularize."

"Do," said Nina, laughing.

"First a cap—long black feather—jewel to hold it in—cap black. For just imagine Romeo in any other color?"

"Well—what next?"

"Next boots and silk stockings, also black."

"Very well."

"For you see," said Max, with a business air, "shoes and buckles would not be in keeping, as they say."

"Especially if you borrowed them."

"No joking, Nina: *Romeo and Juliet* is a serious matter."

"I thought all tragedies were."

"Let me get through," continued Max. "In the third place I shall need a fine dark-colored coat, profusely— Now I know you are going to cry out "Forsooth!" or something of the sort."

"Go on; profusely what?"

"*Laced*—black or dark lace."

Max had guessed rightly. The young girl uttered one of those "hums!" which express so much.

"A laced coat!" she exclaimed.

"Indispensable," groaned Max, shaking his head, sadly.

"And I suppose I am to furnish the whole: or what part? Your boots, or your coat, or your cap—which?"

"I am really afraid, Nina, you will have to furnish all," said Max, piteously.

"Folly!" said Nina.

"Yes, yes, I suppose it is," said Max, "how could you? Certainly you have no boots: what possessed me to come to a young lady for *boots*? I believe I am cracked—I'm nearly sure of it!—Or for a coat, or cap—do young ladies wear coats or caps any more than boots?"

Max let his head fall, mournfully.

"Never mind—don't be so down in the mouth," said Nina, "why you have no energy! We'll see yet. There is time between this and Thursday."

"Well: you make me hope something will turn up."

"I can make the cap."

"Can you! Nina, you are the nicest, most obliging, dearest—"

"That's enough. It is not so very difficult. Will black-velvet be proper?"

"Proper! Romeo himself, if consulted on the point, would be in ecstasies."

"You are recovering your spirits."

"I believe I am."

"See about the coat then."

"But have you velvet for the cap?"

"I have my black velvet body."

"Your what?"

"You know what I mean—the body of my dress; like this. Then for the feather, my riding plume—and for the jewel—I'll sew in this bracelet."

"Nina, I desire to kiss you," said Max, "in no other way can my gratitude—"

"Come a step nearer and I'll burn you with this hot water."

Max, who had risen and approached his cousin, drew back.

"Well—another time," he said, "and now I am going to see Aunt Courtlandt. I'll have my hair powdered, and then—"

"Your hair powdered, indeed!"

"Why, certainly."

"Who'll do it for you?"

"Let me see: why, Monsieur Pantoufle."

"Max, you are the most impudent fellow in the world. Monsieur Pantoufle powder your hair!"

"Will you bet me the cap against—let me see—against a kiss, say, that he does not?"

"I'll bet you a box on the ears."

"Very well: in half an hour—no in an hour—I shall come and tell you which has won."

"I suppose Monsieur Pantoufle will be engaged that length of time upon your hyacinthine curls. Conceited!"

"Why, Nina, you read Shakspeare! No, but I am going to the 'Sisters of Mercy' to see Aunt Courtlandt."

"And who besides?"

"Any one who will submit to being seen."

"Josephine Emberton, for instance."

"Nina, I really believe you are jealous. Josephine and myself like each other: but I assure you nothing serious has passed between us," said Max, gravely.

Nina burst out laughing.

"But *you*! I like you so much better!" said Max, tenderly.

"Aunt Jenny! are you coming?"

"Good," said the young man taking his hat, "I see my conversation is getting dull. Well, now for the coat and boots: fortune favor me!"

CHAPTER IV.

MAX FINDS MONSIEUR PANTOUFLE IN A GREAT RAGE.

THE young man, gayly humming a tune to himself, went along Queen-street toward Monsieur Pantoufle's. Perhaps *swaggered* along would more strikingly suggest his manner of walking. But Max Courtlandt was too well bred and graceful to swagger—in the common acceptance of that word. His gait was jaunty and swinging; but neither affected nor pompous: it was the easy, careless carriage of one who is a favorite with every body, and Max Courtlandt was certainly such a person.

This young man had one of those cordial and winning faces which prepossess all persons in favor of the owner. The men liked to see his cheerful countenance as he passed along:—the fair sex had their joke or laugh for him; the children held him in high favor, for they had judged with the unerring instinct of childhood that the bright smile was part of a loving nature and tender heart. With the little things Max was a prime favorite—in fact with every body, spite of his restless and mischievous bent of mind. That he had his full proportion of this latter amiable quality the reader will perceive in due course of time.

Monsieur Pantoufle was one of those wandering “professors” we have alluded to, and had but a short time before set up his tent, metaphorically speaking, in the town of Martinsburg. This metaphorical tent was in reality “apartments”—that is to say two rooms opening on

Queen-street, one of which served him for a chamber, the other for a studio, fencing gallery, dancing, drawing, and music room. Monsieur Pantoufle taught each and all of these accomplishments.

Monsieur Pantoufle was a little man, always clad in silk stockings, pumps, and ruffles, and his thin hair—invariably powdered—was brushed back from one of those narrow, lynx-like faces, which look out from the portraits of Louis XV.'s time. Under his arm he carried—an inseparable portion of himself—a full-laced cocked hat. If we add that his proper name was Monsieur Pantoufle Hyacinth Xaupi, we have said as much of him as the reader need know for the purposes of this history.

Max found Monsieur Pantoufle—so he was now universally called—in a very great passion, striding up and down his studio, as he liked to call it, and overturning at every round either a music stool, a chair, or a pair of foils, of which several pairs lay scattered about upon the tables and stands.

“Oh me! what is the matter, sir!” cried Max, thinking his bet with Nina already lost. “What has annoyed you, Mousieur Pantoufle?”

“The d—d tailor—*sacre!*” said Monsieur Pantoufle, in a fury.

“What has he done? Every body seems to be put out this morning but myself.”

“He has cut my coat wrong!”

“Your coat—what coat? Ah, I recollect! you are very fond of having your coats made in the fashion of the times of King Louis XIV., Monsieur Pantoufle, with large cuffs and all. Now, I suppose the tailor has cut your coat in some other style—either Louis XIII. or Louis XV. Is not that it, Monsieur Pantoufle?”

“*Oui, oui*, you guess right, my young friend,” said the fencing-master, with a strong French accent, “but he not only cut my coat wrong, he make it wrong!”

"I never should have expected the man to be guilty of such conduct, especially to *you*, Monsieur Pantoufle, who are so particular. Was it of much value? What was the style of the coat?"

"It was Charlemagne, Capet, Spain, Italy, any style but *Grand Monarque* style—*sacre!*" cried Monsieur Pantoufle in a rage. "Begar!" he added, seizing a foil and throwing himself into an attitude; "I will stick him, I will transfigure him like an ortolan on a skewer!"

"*Italy* did you say, monsieur?" said Max, suddenly.

"Any thing but proper cut, my young friend."

"And was it laced?"

"Full laced."

"What color?"

"Black—the royal color?"

"And where is it?"

"I send it back—he say I shall pay."

"But you don't want it?"

"It is *enfin* a thousand league too big for me."

"And is it at the tailor's below?"

"*Oui, oui!*"

"Monsieur Pantoufle," said Max, "perhaps I can help you to get rid of it. What was the price?"

"One hundred and twenty franc."

"But in dollars?"

"*Voyons*—five franc to the—'tis twenty dollar."

"Wait till I return, Monsieur Pantoufle," said Max.

And putting on his hat, he ran out of the room, leaving the fencing-master in profound perplexity.

CHAPTER V.

MAX ARRIVES AT THE TAILOR'S, BREATHLESS, BUT IN TIME.

MAX ran as fast as he could until he had reached the tailor's, so fearful was he that some one had already purchased the coat of his imagination. He was convinced that his only chance to become its happy possessor was to anticipate the whole eager community.

It was hanging up in the window: Max breathed and went in more calmly.

"What a pretty coat that is in the window!" he said, "good morning, Mr. Barlow: take it down, I want to see it."

The tailor laughed.

"I made it for Mr. Pantoufle," he said, "but he refuses to receive it."

"You wouldn't force him to, Mr. Barlow," said the young man, "I know you wouldn't!"

"I don't know. What can I do with it? It *might* serve as a sort of sign out there."

"A sign?"

"Yes, of my making; it is as nice a piece of work as I ever did."

"It is so," said Max, examining it, and wistfully passing the laced cuffs through his fingers, "I think I should like to have that coat myself."

"You?" said the tailor, surprised.

"I think really I should," said Max thoughtfully, and in a melancholy tone; "but I can't, I'm afraid."

"You want it?"

"Yes, yes, my friend; the very thing."

"Why, you shall have it then cheap."

Max shook his head, with a sad smile.

"How much?" he said.

"Eighteen dollars."

"Eighteen dollars! A fortune—Oh I wish I had eighteen dollars. I haven't got it."

"You seem to have set your heart on it—now to oblige a friend I'll say sixteen dollars. I wouldn't for any one but you."

Max shook his head, sighing.

"Oh, what a pretty coat; and it is the very thing! *couldn't* I buy it!"

"It is dirt cheap."

"Sixteen dollars—sixteen dollars!"

"Say fifteen, not a cent less; it cost me fourteen, on my word."

"Oh, I was not trying to beat you down, Mr. Barlow. I was only thinking of the price, and where I should get the money."

"You may pay me at any time."

"No, no, I have promised uncle never to buy on credit. Fifteen dollars," murmured Max wistfully, "let me try it on, Mr. Barlow."

The tailor helped him on with the coat. It fitted to perfection.

"I never saw any thing so becoming," said the tailor.

"Not fashionable, though," suggested Max, smiling, and looking at the cuffs.

"Why no—but really you look like the Marquis Lafayette."

"You are attacking me through my vanity, Mr. Barlow. It is a pretty coat," said Max, admiring himself in a large glass, "and what nice lace."

"The best."

"It will just suit," continued Max, and stretching out his arm, he muttered "'Tybalt, liest thou there in thy bloody sheet!'"

"Yes, it is really too cheap."

"Fifteen dollars?" said Max, waking up from his revery. "Ah, I will have it; and *not* through Nina. Certainly I will have it. *She* will give me the money; she is so good. Why didn't I think of that before?"

"You take it?" asked the tailor.

"Yes, yes! but provisionally, Mr. Barlow—contingent on a negotiation I am about to undertake," said Max, smiling, "I really must have that coat."

"You shall."

"Keep it for me until to-morrow, and promise not to sell it. I have my suspicions that Hans Huddleshingle wants that coat: I think, too, that Monsieur Pantoufle might pass by, and change his mind. Promise that no one shall have it—neither Hans or Monsieur Pantoufle or any one. What should the dancing master take it for? You can make him a real Louis XIV. grand monarch coat," said Max, smiling, "and I shall, therefore, Mr. Barlow, consider this coat promised to me; is it not?"

"The great Mogul should not buy it," said Mr. Barlow, laughing.

"Well, I'll come for it—fortune favoring me," Max said; and he returned much relieved to Monsieur Pantoufle.

CHAPTER VI.

HOW NINA LOST HER WAGER.

MONSIEUR PANTOUFLE had recovered a portion of his habitual equanimity. The numerous "sacres," he had uttered were so many safety valves for his pent up anger. He had replaced under his arm the indispensable cocked hat which in the torrent of his wrath had fallen to the floor, and was amusing himself by making passes at a wooden figure representing a man which stood near his harpsichord—which exercise he accompanied with many stamps of the feet and contortions of visage.

"Well, Monsieur Pantoufle," said the young man, "I have succeeded in persuading Mr. Barlow not to force you to accept that coat, but on the contrary to sell it to me. The fact is 'tis *not* a Louis XIV. fashion."

"Never! but sell it to you."

"To me."

"You want it?"

"Yes. Do you object to my having the coat?"

"Oh, not so my young friend. 'Tis a grand favor to persuade that *canaille* to take it back. *Je vous remercie.*"

"I know what that means. It means, 'I thank you.' I wish you would teach me French, Monsieur Pantoufle, you speak it with such elegance."

"Ah! Monsieur Max, you flatter me."

"Oh, no, Monsieur Pantoufle."

"Ah, yes—" said the Frenchman, shrugging his shoulders; "you are ver polite."

"Not half as polite as you, Monsieur."

"You do me honor," said Monsieur Pantoufle, bowing.

"Oh, I'm but a boy: you are a great traveler," replied Max with a bow still lower.

"We shall be friends, Monsieur Max," said the delighted fencing master, whose greatest ambition was the reputation of a traveled man, who had seen the world. "You shall come see me—we shall fence, we shall play violin together; I shall give you lessons in the dance."

"Oh, I already dance tolerably well—the minuet I like the most."

"All the other dance is nothing."

"That is royal, is it not?"

"His grand majesty Louis XIV. dance nothing else all his life."

"Indeed!"

"'Tis true."

"Well, I can dance the minuet, and I often go to the convent over there—the Sisters of Mercy you know—and dance it with them."

"You dance minuet there?"

"Oh yes—with Miss ——, but you don't know her, Monsieur Pantoufle."

"Who? ah, your *amie*, Monsieur Max!"

"No, no, but Monsieur Pantoufle, I have just thought of a project for increasing your number of scholars. You have a good many, have you not?"

"Yes, yes, and I think the most charming, the most elegant, is Mademoiselle Nina."

"Thank you, Monsieur. Well my scheme was to introduce you into the convent. You know my aunt is Superior."

"Introduce me into the convent?" asked Monsieur Pantoufle, in astonishment.

"Oh, it is not strictly a convent, far from it. We call it so for fun. It is a Catholic school—very strict though.

Now, I think, I could prevail on aunt Courtlandt to let her scholars take dancing lessons."

Monsieur Pantoufle's face beamed with delight.

"There are forty or fifty," continued Max; "now say thirty take lessons."

"Will that many dance, think you?"

"At least—oh, at least thirty. Well, thirty at—how much?"

"Twenty dollar a whole year."

"Thirty at twenty dollars would be—would it not, Monsieur Pantoufle—six hundred dollars."

Monsieur Pantoufle stretched out his arms, and embraced the young man.

"'Tis magnificent!" he cried.

"Six hundred dollars is a nice sum, Monsieur Pantoufle. It will buy a heap of things; ever so much of that nice hair-powder I see on your toilet, for instance. Let me see what it is made of, Monsieur Pantoufle."

The Frenchman skipped to the toilet table and brought the box.

"Oh, what nice perfume there is in it!" cried Max, taking up in his fingers a portion of the fragrant powder.

"'Tis my Paris receipt, Monsieur Max."

"Oh, how nice. How pleasant it must feel on the head."

"Magnificent!"

"I should like so much to have my head powdered for once, like those fine gentlemen who pass in their curricles with their fair topped boots, and silk stockings to the parties. I should feel like a lord."

"Take—take, my young friend."

"No, I would never know how to put it on."

"Rub—rub—'tis all."

"I couldn't. Now if some of my friends were only here to put a little on my head!"

"I will myself, Monsieur Max. I am ver good friend to you."

"O, I couldn't think of it, Monsieur Pantoufle!" cried Max laughing.

"'Tis nothing—sit down."

"Never, never, Monsieur Pantoufle!"

"'Tis no trouble."

"A man of your standing, think, Monsieur Pantoufle!"

"For a friend, Monsieur Max!"

Max sat down with a laugh.

"Well, how can I thank you sufficiently! Just a little, Monsieur Pantoufle!"

The Frenchman went through the operation of powdering with the ease and celerity of his nation—that nation which does every thing gracefully, from overturning a throne to seasoning a sauce.

Max rose from the operation with a delicious feeling about the coronal region, and snuffing in clouds of delicate perfume. It seemed to him that some magical influence had suddenly converted him into a large bouquet, redolent of a thousand odors.

He looked in the large mirror; a snow storm seemed to have descended on his long curling hair, and on his shoulders.

"O," cried Max, putting on his hat, "how sweet it is! How obliging you are, Monsieur Pantoufle! How can I thank you. I never can!"

"'Tis nothing—'tis nothing," said Monsieur Pantoufle, politely.

"And now good morning, Monsieur Pantoufle, I must go to aunt Courtlandt's. I'll remember what I said about the dancing."

"And so I will," said Max to himself, as he went out, "though I *did* promise only to get my head powdered."

CHAPTER VII.

HOW MAX VERY NEARLY FOUGHT A DUEL WITH MR. HANS HUDDLESHINGLE, ABOUT HIS COAT.

As Max Courtlandt passed by Mr. Barlow's door, his jealous eye fell upon a gentleman who, with his hands stuck in his pockets, was occupied in gazing intently on the celebrated coat. Max felt all the jealousy of a lover, when the heart of his mistress is endeavored to be alienated from him.

On approaching nearer he discovered that this man was an acquaintance, and no other than the individual who had been pointed out by his prophetic imagination as the rival he would probably encounter in his attempt to seduce into his possession the much coveted coat. In a word, the gentleman gazing so intently into the window of Mr. Barlow's establishment, was that red-haired, broad-shouldered, and red-cheeked young German, Mr. Hans Huddleshingle.

"Hans," said the young man, touching him on the shoulder, "what are you looking at there?"

Mr. Huddleshingle turned round.

"At that coat," he replied.

"That coat—ah!"

"Well, what is so strange in that?"

"Oh, nothing."

"It is a very pretty coat."

"Very!"

"The finest lace I ever saw."

"Yes, it is," said Max.

"I think I should like to have it."

"But you shall not!" cried Max.

"Shall not? what do you mean?"

"I mean you shall not have that coat in the window."

"If I want it, I will."

"Try it," said Max, getting angry; "it is mine, sir, and you shall not lay your hand on it."

"Hallo!" cried Mr. Barlow, coming out of his shop, "what's all this about—quarreling, gentlemen?"

"I was not," said Mr. Huddleshingle.

"I have no desire to quarrel with any one," said Max, "but—"

"Well, Mr. Huddleshingle, I am ready."

"Where are you going?" asked Max.

"To the court-house. I am subpoenaed in a suit of Mr. Huddleshingle's, which will be tried to-day, and he came round for me."

"And he was waiting here—"

"Until I had locked my money drawer," replied Mr. Barlow.

Max burst out laughing.

"Hans," he said, offering his hand, "I beg your pardon for my rudeness; but I thought you were bent on depriving me of my coat. Now I have set my heart on having that coat, and I believe I should fight in mortal combat for it."

"You were near it," said Mr. Barlow, laughing, while the young men shook hands—Max cordially, Mr. Huddleshingle phlegmatically; "but I had promised to keep it for you, had I not?"

"Yes, you had. But when a person has but one idea in his head, he is always doing something foolish. That coat is my single idea, at present."

"It's a good-looking coat—but I don't want it," said Mr. Huddleshingle, "come go with us to the court-house, and hear Lyttelton. He is booked for a great speech to-day."

"What the solemn Mr. Lyttelton?"

"William Lyttelton."

"I'll go; he looks as wise as an owl. If I can get up as grave a face, when I get my license, my fortune will be made."

In five minutes, they reached the court-house.

"Come, here we are," said Mr. Huddleshingle; "Mr. Barlow, we'll be ready for you in a little time."

So saying, the young German led the way into the court-house.

CHAPTER VIII.

HUNTER JOHN MYERS.

MAX, forgetful for the time of his "negotiation," was about to enter the old ante-revolutionary building ("where the court-house stands," the act incorporating Martinsburg says), when a hand was laid on his shoulder, and a hearty and firm voice uttered the words, "Well, Max, how is it with you to-day?"

He who had thus arrested Max, was a tall, gaunt, powerful man, of a slightly stooping figure, clad in a hunting shirt, and old weather-beaten slouched hat, originally brown, now of no particular color, but a mixture of all. Leaning quietly on the railing of the court-house, he alternately raised and lowered with two fingers, an enormous rifle—the butt of which rested on his Indian moccasin—as if it were but a straw. The hunter—for such he plainly was—seemed verging upon sixty; his beard was grizzled, his hair already gray. From beneath his shaggy eyebrows flashed a pair of keen gray eyes; and his lips were thin and firm. There was nothing disagreeable, however, in his face, rather the contrary; a quiet, simple smile seemed the natural expression of his countenance and in the keenness of the eye there was nothing threatening, though much to show that the owner had latent in his character something that once aroused would make him "dangerous."

He held out his hand to the young man, and inclosed his delicate fingers in his iron grasp.

"How is it with you, Max?" he said.

"Thank you, sir, I am very well," said Max, respectfully, "I hope all are well in Meadow Branch."

"Yes—all well," replied the hunter; "and your uncle told me to say that you, and Nina, and Barry, might look to see him in a day or two."

"Oh! then he will be down to the play!" said Max, joyfully.

The mountaineer smiled.

"Yes—he's nigh done on his farm, and the hands can get along without him for a time, I reckon. He was telling me of your and Sally's play—though I don't know as yet what that is."

"It's from Shakspeare, sir "

"Anan?" said the hunter, inclining his ear.

"It is part of a play from Shakspeare, sir—'Romeo and Juliet.' "

"Ah, you young folks are mightily ahead of us old people. I've heard tell of Shakspeare, but I never did see what you call a play."

"But you have seen a great deal of *reality*—if not a play, sir."

This was said with a modest laugh and some little embarrassment. There were but two or three persons in existence who were complimented by any diffidence, felt on the part of Mr. Max Courtlandt in their company; the old hunter was one of these—a man whom Max respected much. When he ventured on a joke, therefore, Mr. Max, uttered a profoundly respectful laugh.

"Reality? Ah, you mean the old times. Well, there *was* mighty little play that's true, when Injuns were about."

"I've heard you tell of those times often, sir, when you used to come over to uncle's, and sit by the fire with me on your knee; a long, long time ago."

"Yes; I've been getting old this many a day. We

old fellows are fond of running on about the old times gone by so long. They were hard days, and I never want to see 'em back."

"Oh! but I have wished I lived then, a thousand times."

"Why?"

"What a splendid, glorious life, so full of joyful adventures!" exclaimed Max, with sparkling eyes.

"Anan?" said the hunter.

Max blushed.

"I mean, we live so tamely and easily now."

The hunter shook his head.

"I remember when that street was covered with thick pine growth—and often and over I've stood on the rock where that stone house over the bridge is, and seen nothing but the court-house here, and a few poor cabins. Is it worse now? No, no, much better."

"But the adventures you had, sir."

"The adventures were plenty enough—you could not stir without your gun!"

"The Indians, sir?"

"Injuns, Max—blood-thirsty child-killers."

The hunter's eye flashed, and his brown, weather-beaten face, flushed.

"I have never got over that," he said, "and though the whole earth is most nigh changed, and there's no danger, you see my old gun travels about with me like it used to. But here we are, diggin' into the times gone, and I don't know even how my Sally is. I've just come from the valley, and was waiting till her school was out."

"It is nearly time, sir. You will see her coming down the street soon, toward the run where the girls play."

"I must go and make her tell me all about the play you are going to have. I know it's right though, because neighbor Von Horn said it was."

“Oh! sir—”

“Why, there is my Sally,” the hunter said, with an expression of quiet pleasure on his old face; “who’s with her?—my old eyes are getting bad.”

“Barry, sir.”

“I must see Barry, too—Barry’s a good boy. Come Max; they don’t see us.”

And they left the court-house just as that legal gentleman, Mr. Lyttelton, compared by Max to a solemn owl, began to shake the walls with his indignant thunder.

CHAPTER IX.

TYPES OF THE PAST AND THE PRESENT.

SALLY MYERS was a pretty little girl of twelve, open and ingenuous in manner, and with the brightest eyes and cheeks in the world. She and Barry seemed to be on excellent terms, laughing and talking about a thousand things. He carried in his left hand her sachel, which was empty and destined to receive such flowers as the autumn days, now fairly come, had spared to the green banks of the run. His right hand held one of the child's, which he swung backward and forward as if it was all for fun—a mere unconscious, mechanical act—which it was not.

The child looking round saw her father; the old hunter stretched out his arms—Barry felt the small hand suddenly jerked away, and she was in those stalwart arms, on that broad breast.

Max touched Barry and said laughing:

“Pretty sight isn't it, Barry?”

Barry blushed, and smiled.

“Why, how well she looks,” said the hunter admiringly, “cheeks like the roses, and she's really getting fat here in town! Did any body ever!”

The child laughed.

“I am so, father!” she said; “and I don't know what I'll look like in the play with Mr. Max—besides being so scared!”

“What is it, darling?”

"It's Juliet I'm to play, sir. I most know it now, and Mr. Max showed me, yesterday, how to kill myself."

"Anan?" said the hunter.

"I'm to kill myself, you know, father—in the piece."

"She's to make out she kills herself, sir," said Max, laughing.

"Yes, sir," said the child; "I have done it two or three times now, and I know all my words."

The old hunter shook his head.

"It's mighty strange to me, this playing like you were in earnest: but I know it's all right, because Jacob Von Horn says it is. Besides, I'll be there little one, to see you killin' yourself," added the old man, laughing.

Then stooping down, he kissed his little daughter again—the small bright face against the old weather-beaten brows so long lashed by stormy winds—the tender arms tightly clasped around those brawny shoulders which had borne the weight of that past discoursed of; that past more stormy than the stormiest wind! Here for the thoughtful eye was truly the young, bright present, full of peace and joy, clasping the rugged strength—hardened in many stern encounters—of the former time.

"The old man is ill without you, little one, up there in his valley," said the mountaineer. "I must come and see you oftener. Now I must go, daughter, to see to my business. I'll be at the school, though, this evening."

"Come to our house, and we'll send Barry for her, sir; or if Barry won't go," said Max, laughing, "I'll go myself for Miss Juliet."

The old man assented to this, and left them, his gun under his arm.

"Well, Juliet, we must have a rehearsal," said the young man; "get your part well by this evening. Have you your white dress?"

"Oh yes, Mr. Max!" said the child.

"And that reminds me that I must leave you, Juliet,

though your beauty makes this street a 'feasting presence full of light.' I must go and see my friend, Mrs. Courtlandt, about my dress."

"Oh, ain't you afraid, Mr. Max?"

"Afraid!—why?"

"She's such a dreadful person the girls say, you know."

"Do the girls say that?"

"Yes, sir," said the child, "don't they, Barry? I wouldn't dare to look at her!"

"She *is* dreadful," said Max, "a regular old ogress: but she's my aunt, Sally: I must not abuse her."

And Max leaving the children to finish their stroll in the direction of Tuscarora brook, took his way toward the abode of the ogress, Mrs. Courtlandt.

CHAPTER X.

THE DREADFUL MRS. COURTLANDT.

THE convent, as the young man—somewhat incorrectly—called the dwelling of the “Sisters of Mercy,” stood just upon the brow of the ascent, beyond the arch spanning the ravine. It was even then an old house, and was, perhaps, as finely finished in its “woodwork” as any building in the whole valley of Virginia. The former possessor was one of those free and joyous spirits who fill their mansions with gayety and music, and entertain all the world:—welcoming every new comer in the old open-handed, free, true-hearted style.

In those days the rooms echoed to merry measures, danced to by merry feet, and merry laughter flowing from glad merry hearts. Now the Sisters of Mercy—a charitable society of Catholic ladies—had possession; and though they had a school for girls there, there was little merriment. Max had called it a convent; he was not far from the mark, since Mrs. Courtlandt the superior, had the reputation of being very strict in her ideas of a superior’s duties; and scarcely ever permitted the young ladies—Protestant and Catholic—placed under her care to receive visitors from the town.

This redoubtable castle, commanded by this terrible ogress, as Mrs. Courtlandt was reputed to be—whether justly or unjustly we shall see—Max was on the point of taking by assault.

He ran up the steps and gave a thundering knock. A

neatly dressed servant girl, her face composed into a prim and grave expression, replied to his summons; but at sight of Max this primness disappeared, and the grave face relaxed into a smile.

"Oh, how set up you looked, when you thought I was somebody else!" cried Max, gayly.

"Who do you want to see, Mr. Max?" asked the girl, laughing; "not—"

Max drew himself up.

"Miss Prudence," he said, "I am surprised that you—a staid New England lady—should ask me such a question."

"Oh, I thought—"

"Who should I wish to see in this establishment—this convent—"

"Certainly nobody, but—"

"My much-loved—"

"Oh, I knew you were in love with her!" cried Miss Prudence, giggling.

"In love with *her*!"

"She's the nicest person here."

"Certainly she is, Prudence."

"The prettiest, too."

"Hum! I don't know—"

"I'll tell her that!"

"Tell whom?"

"Miss Josephine!"

"Josephine—Josephine—tell her what?"

"That you said somebody else was prettier, Mr. Max."

"Who said any thing about Josephine!"

"You!"

"Me?"

"Certainly."

"Why, I came here to see aunt Courtlandt."

"You said *she* was the nicest person here; you know you meant Miss Josephine."

"Prudence, you belie your name. Miss Prudence, your proper designation would be Miss Mischief. I request Miss Prudence, that you will at once tell my respected aunt I have come to see her."

"Your respected aunt is ready to see you," said a voice from the right-hand room.

"Oh! Mr. Max," whispered the girl, "she heard every word I said!"

"Certainly she did," replied Max, coolly.

And leaving Miss Prudence somewhat abashed, he entered the apartment where the dreaded Mrs. Courtlandt waited to receive him.

She was a woman of thirty five or forty, tall, masculine, and severe in deportment; but from her black eyes shone a world of latent good-humor and charity. Mrs. Courtlandt was one of those persons whose real characters are wholly concealed by their outward appearance, and who consequently have the reputation, with the thoughtless and surface-judging world, of being just what they abhor and are the most removed from. In ordinary society, she seemed the farthest possible removed from gayety or cheerfulness—in reality, there was not one particle of sternness in her character. She was cheerful, charitable, loving;—if her natural gayety, and girlish lightness were gone, there was good reason for it in that misfortune which had chilled her heart for years. But with this our story has nothing whatever to do.

Mrs. Courtlandt was certainly eccentric, however: her dress, for instance, was *sui generis*. It consisted of an upper garment, which bore a striking resemblance to a man's sack coat;—a very short skirt apparently of broad-cloth;—and on her feet (her enemies—who has them not?—whispered), the usual feminine slippers were replaced by—boots! Perhaps this report had its origin in Mrs. Courtlandt's fearless mode of riding on her numerous errands as a Sister of Mercy;—perhaps there really was

some foundation for the charge : we shall see. Magnificent black hair cut short and closely confined by a silken net of the same color, gave a stately expression to the face of the lady, whose portrait we have thus made an attempt to sketch.

"Well, Max," said Mrs. Courtlandt, rising from her seat, "pray what were you saying to Prudence about 'nice people?'"

"Oh, aunt," said Max, taking the offered hand with a mixture of affection and respect, "you heard us, did you?"

"Certainly, the door was open."

"What did you hear?" continued Max, desiring, like a cautious diplomatist, to sound the depths of the enemy's knowledge.

"I heard you say you had come to see the 'nicest person in the convent.'"

"That was you, you know, aunt," said Max, laughing.

"Nonsense!"

"Not you?"

"Decidedly not."

"Who then, aunt?"

"Josephine Emberton, perhaps."

"Josephine! oh, aunt, what could put such an idea in your head?"

"Were you not talking about her with Prudence just now?"

Max had forgotten this small circumstance.

"Why yes, we certainly were, dear aunt—I now recollect. But you must have heard my reply to Prudence—who, by-the-by, aunt, is a remarkably pleasant young lady; I never saw less of the *duenna*—you know the maids in Spain are called *duennas*—I've been reading a novel lately, all about that—and—"

"What a tongue you have, Max; you talk too much; but, after all perhaps it is better that the excess should be in that than in the other direction."

"Do you think I shall make a lawyer?"

"I hope so."

"If I could only turn out a credit to the family now, aunt," said Max, smiling.

"I think you will, Max," his aunt replied, with an almost affectionate glance at her nephew, "you are a great rattle-trap, but have very good sense."

"Do you really think so, my dearest aunt—you delight me; though confidentially speaking, I never have considered myself a perfect dunce."

"When do you apply for your license to practice?"

"Not for a year still—but I am already 'retained'—that is the word with us lawyers, aunt!" said Max; "I'm already engaged in a suit—though not exactly at law."

"What do you mean?"

"I'm engaged to defend somebody."

"Who, in the world?"

"*Juliet*, aunt—I shall have opposed to me, *Paris*, whom it is arranged beforehand I shall overcome."

"What an inveterate jester you are! Well, I have heard something of this. Come and tell me all about it in my lecture-room. I wish to try some experiments while the children are playing in the garden."

And Mrs. Courtlandt with stately gait led the way to the lecture-room beyond.

CHAPTER XI.

MAX KEEPS HIS PROMISE TO MONSIEUR PANTOUFLE.

THE lecture-room was in the rear of the house, and opened upon a long portico which overlooked a handsome falling garden full of flowers, of which Mrs. Courtlandt was very fond, and shaded by tall trees, whose leaves were just beginning to turn yellow. The lecture-room was not finished with the extreme beauty of the one they had just left, where the chisel of some Benvenuto Cellini, seemed to have shaped the cornices and wainscoting, so admirably carved were the wreathes of flowers, and delicate traceries of drooping vines. Here the modern and practical seemed to have routed the antique and poetical.

The room was full of electrical machines, Leyden jars, telescopes, black boards, slates and school-books. On the benches lay, half-open, "Natural Philosophies," "Euclids," algebras, atlases, and geographies—with here and there a carelessly thrown down sun-bonnet. After traveling with much dissatisfaction through the most beautiful regions of the world—radiant in blue and yellow—the school-girls had, with the greatest satisfaction, betaken themselves to an exploration of ground nearer home—namely, the yards and garden of the convent.

Mrs. Courtlandt was devoted to science for its own sake—laborious study and acts of charity absorbed her whole mind, and time, and interest.

Max looked round on this heterogeneous assemblage of his school day tormentors, and blest his stars that he was

no longer a child, and among his childish things had put away algebras and geographies. Mrs. Courtlandt looked at the electrical machines as if they were trusty friends—well beloved. She turned a handle, and with a discharging rod emptied a jar.

"This is my invention nephew," she said, "see how rapidly the electricity accumulated."

"I like electricity and geometry, aunt," Max replied, "and that is nearly all."

"You never would study any thing long enough," she said, "ah, the young people are growing so frivolous."

"I am not frivolous, aunt."

"You all are."

"Then every thing but science is frivolous."

"I did not mean that—you know Max, that I have never been opposed to harmless diversion."

"'Harmless diversion,'" repeated the young man to himself, "that seems to me to be the exact description of *dancing*—and now or never, is my opportunity to keep my promise to Monsieur Pantoufle. Honor bright!"

"Aunt," said Max, "I don't think you observed how elegantly my head is powdered—did you?"

"No—I observe it now, however."

"Isn't it elegant?"

Mrs. Courtlandt smiled.

"You certainly came to see some of my scholars—most probably Josephine—instead of an old woman, like myself."

"You an old woman! My dear aunt, you know you—"

"No flattery, Max—recollect it is thrown away on me;—how can you be so foolish."

"I was only going to say what every body says, aunt, that you are lovely; you know I think you are, and if I did want to see Josephine, I came to see you to-day—indeed I did. And Monsieur Pantoufle powdered my hair,

because I said I was coming to see you—how obliging in him!" said Max, laughing.

"Did the dancing-master himself powder your hair?"

"Monsieur Pantoufle himself."

"Why, you must have given him love-powders—he so punctilious—"

"I gave him something better than love-powders for his hair-powder, aunt."

"What was that?"

"I gave him a promise."

"A promise?"

"Yes, and you know I always keep my promises. I promised to recommend him to you for a dancing-master—to teach all those charming and graceful young damsels hopping about out there in the garden how to lance!"

Mrs. Courtlandt's face assumed a curious expression.

"Monsieur Pantoufle my *dancing master*!" she said.

"Oh, no—not *yours*, aunt—not teach *you* to dance; you dance now, elegantly I have heard, especially the minuet."

"Well, if I have danced when I was young and giddy," said Mrs. Courtlandt, with a sigh, "I do not now."

"But you don't disapprove of it?"

"No—not at all; you know how often I have played minuets for yourself and Josephine. I suppose the town would think I was crazy, if they saw me seated at the harpsichord playing, while you young folks were courtesying and bowing about the room to the music. I will think of Monsieur Pantoufle's request, and if my scholars obtain permission from their parents, they shall find no obstacle in a refusal from their old schoolmistress. I do not disapprove of dancing, or any other harmless pleasure, nephew—heaven forbid! young people will be young people, and if I feel as old as Methuselah, it does not prove that they must feel so too. No, no—I am very ec-

centric and odd, I suppose, but I am no enemy to innocent enjoyment."

"You are the best and sweetest woman I know in the whole world, aunt," cried the young man, catching the dreadful Mrs. Courtlandt in his arms, and saluting her with an enthusiastic kiss.

At that moment Max heard a subdued "hem!" behind him. He turned round, and found himself face to face with Miss Josephine Emberton.

CHAPTER XII.

MAX PROPOSES A BUSINESS ARRANGEMENT TO MISS JOSEPHINE EMBERTON.

MISS JOSEPHINE EMBERTON was a small, slender young lady of fifteen or sixteen, with profuse dark hair, much like Mrs. Courtlandt's, and brilliant eyes, lips, teeth, and complexion. In her madcap smile the very essence of mischief betrayed itself, though at times a most winning softness was not wanting—only the more striking for the contrast.

"Good-morning, sir," said Miss Josephine, with a mock bow to the young man; then to Mrs. Courtlandt, "I just came in because I was tired jumping the rope, ma'am," she said.

"Jumping the rope!" said Max, "is it possible a young lady as old as yourself jumps the *rope*!"

"Certainly, sir."

"But you didn't come in for that—you heard me in here; did you not, now?"

"No, but I saw you—" said Miss Josephine, laughing.

"Kissing his old aunt," said Mrs. Courtlandt, finishing the sentence with a smile which somewhat disconcerted Miss Josephine, "but you do not know why he was thanking me, I think."

"No, ma'am."

"Because I did not set my face against dancing—Monsieur Pantoufle the dancing-master, wishes to give lessons here," said Mrs. Courtlandt, moving away.

"Oh, how delightful it will be!" said Josephine, clasping her hands.

"*Would* be, Miss Josephine, you should say," Max replied; "the thing is not arranged so nicely yet as you seem to think."

"Pray, what has Mr. Max to do with our dancing," the young girl said, "I suppose it is one of his usual airs?"

"My usual airs!" cried Max; "I have a great deal to do with it, Miss Josephine. I proposed it to Monsieur Pantoufle, and aunt has consented to allow you all to write and ask your respected parents for permission to take lessons."

"Oh! so you know Monsieur Pantoufle, Mr. Max?"

"He is one of my best friends."

"What a big man you are getting!" continued Miss Josephine, "you are a friend of Monsieur Pantoufle—you are kind enough to do us poor little school-girls a kindness—you are going to play *Romeo*—oh, what a fine gentleman!—please don't stop speaking to me."

Max received this raillery with great coolness, and replied: "You might have used the words of *Portia*, 'I pray you know me when we meet again,' but that reminds me, Miss Josephine, of a matter of business. Don't think me so disinterested. Lawyers—and lawyers *to be* too, don't give their time and talents for nothing; I hold *that* to be a cardinal doctrine of our profession—"

"*Our* profession!"

"Don't interrupt me, Miss Josephine—I was about to explain. For my exertions in favor of yourself and your companions, I ask your assistance in a very perplexing matter. You have mentioned, my dear Miss Josie—I beg pardon *Josephine*, for you know aunt, who is busy at her electrical machine yonder, dislikes nicknames—"

"So do I."

"How can I get on!" cried Max, impatiently, "if you interrupt me whenever I speak."

"Really!"

"You spoke of my acting, Josie—what a tongue I have!—Miss Josephine, I should say. Now, to act Romeo it is absolutely necessary I should have a dress—"

"Well."

"Dress requires money, Miss Josephine!"

"Money!"

"And the idea which has occurred to me," continued Max, with a business air, "is for you girls to raise a subscription to buy my dress."

"Are you in earnest?"

"Certainly I am."

The young girl looked doubtfully at her companion.

"Give me a slate and pencil," continued Max, "and we'll figure it out."

Josephine handed him a slate. He sat down and wrote on the left hand, "Romeo's Dress"—on the right, "Subscribers."

"How many girls?"

"About forty," said Josephine.

"Excellent—that is forty subscribers; but say only twenty dance—that is twenty subscribers."

"Are you in earnest?" repeated Miss Josephine, bending over him.

"In earnest about what?" asked Mrs. Courtlandt, behind them.

Josephine drew back, and the young man said, laughing:

"About subscribing an amount of money, for which I am negotiating a loan, aunt."

"What do you mean?"

"Only a joke, aunt."

"I might have known that—you are always joking. Josephine," she continued, "go ask Sister Julia if it is not time to call in school. Good-by, nephew; you must not stay."

"That's what you always say, aunt—would my face frighten the girls? But dear aunt, I have something to say to you. Please come in here for five minutes."

"Certainly, nephew," said Mrs. Courtlandt, following him into the front room.

CHAPTER XIII.

MAX MORALIZES ON THE VANITY OF FASHIONS IN COSTUME.

MAX looked at his aunt and sighed, which ceremony very naturally excited the lady's curiosity.

"Well, nephew," she began, "what have you to say to me? make haste; school will be called in, and I hear Sister Julia and Sister Martha coming down stairs. What did you want?"

Max's eye wandered mournfully over his aunt's figure, and endeavored to ascertain whether report had rightly charged her with wearing boots. Then he heaved a second sigh.

"Well, what are you thinking about," asked Mrs. Courtlandt, patiently folding her hands.

"I was thinking, my dear aunt," replied her nephew, "of the importance the world attaches to the outward appearance of things. At the moment you spoke, I was reflecting upon the peculiar costume you have adopted—no doubt with good reason—and of the great number of invidious observations I had heard about it, from some of the most charitable persons of my acquaintance."

"About my dress?" asked Mrs. Courtlandt, "who pray?—have I not a right to dress as seems best to myself?"

"Certainly, my dear aunt, and that is precisely what I have often had occasion to say. You undoubtedly have that right, and yet I believe you have personally offended some most excellent persons by not dressing as *they* think you should dress—indeed I *know* you have."

"*Offended*, did you say, nephew?"

"Yes, yes, aunt."

"Why, what is offensive in my costume?" continued Mrs. Courtlandt, looking at herself.

"There it is, aunt—nothing at all. Even if you do wear boots—I have often said—are boots unfeminine, are boots improper?"

Mrs. Courtlandt held out her foot: it was cased in a good, substantial covering, something between a gaiter and a boot, but with this peculiarity, that the upper leather was thin and pliant and fell down, so to speak in folds.

"There is my foot," said Mrs. Courtlandt, stoutly, "judge if I wear boots, nephew."

"I really do not know what to call that, aunt—" said Max, conceiving at the very moment a nefarious intention in the depths of his heart.

"It is a shoe I have worn for years, to prevent the stirrup from rubbing my ankle," said Mrs. Courtlandt calmly, "and I shall wear it as long as I think it my duty to ride about and visit the sick: consulting no one on the subject but myself. But now Max, tell me what all your moralizing about the importance of costume—and boots—and people's opinions—signifies. Pray make haste—I must go very soon to my duties."

"That train of thought was suggested to me, dear aunt," replied the young man, sighing, "by my engagement to appear as Romeo on Thursday."

"How is that?"

"Romeo was an Italian, was he not, aunt?"

"Why certainly, the scene lies in Verona—but what connection—"

"I know what you would ask, aunt," interrupted Max, "how does this connect itself with costume."

"Well—how does it?"

"If Romeo lived in Italy, he dressed differently from Americans, did he not, aunt?"

"Certainly."

"And I am to act Romeo—you know that, dear aunt?"

"Yes—what next?"

"Well, now, I doubt if I should properly represent the character in this brown sack coat, and the rest of my dress."

"You could not—have you not prepared your dress? Mrs. ——'s exhibition is next week, you know."

Max heaved a deep sigh.

"I know it, aunt—but I have no dress; the coat is the great difficulty. There is a coat up at Barlow's, which answers to perfection. I must have that coat, aunt! you can't imagine how I have set my heart upon that coat. Oh, I should make such conquests—I know the sex, well, very well—"

"The sex! what do you mean?"

"The female sex—the gentler, tender, more romantic sex. They all judge from outward appearances, my dear aunt—I know the effect a charming coat like that will have upon them—"

"I am of the 'sex' you libel."

"You! oh, no; you are above them much, aunt, a thousand times superior to them. I do not covet the coat for such as you—but the young maidens. But after all, the price is fifteen dollars," added Max, mournfully. "Aunt, I want fifteen dollars."

Mrs. Courtlandt rose. "Is that what you have been coming to all this time?"

"Yes, yes, my dearest aunt. I was embarrassed—like an unfortunate borrower, I did not know how to bring out my want at once, and say I had come for it. But I did come for it;—your affectionate nephew humbly requests a donation of this coat from his beloved aunt."

"Well, his beloved aunt will give it to him," said Mrs. Courtlandt, "and you shall pay me out of your first fee; recollect it is a debt of honor, nephew—you can give me

no security," continued the lady, taking the fifteen dollars from her purse.

"I think I shall kiss you again, aunt," said Max, "how good you are to me!"

Perhaps Max would have carried this threat into effect—but at the moment when he moved toward Mrs. Courtlandt, the mischievous face of Miss Josephine appeared in the framework of the door.

"Miss Julia is ready, ma'am," she said to Mrs. Courtlandt.

"Good morning, nephew," said Mrs. Courtlandt, "come again soon." And passing by the young girl, who made way for her, she left the room.

Josephine lingered a moment.

"Shall we really have the subscription?" she asked dubiously.

Max drew himself up.

"I am surprised, Josephine, at your asking such a question," he said.

"Surprised—indeed!"

"My dear Josephine," said the young man, taking from his breast a small locket, "do you see this?"

"Yes—some of my hair; I wish I had never let you coax it from me. Give it back to me!"

"I prefer not; I attach to it an interest far too tender. And you—could you suppose that after receiving from that fair hand, this beautiful lock of hair as a pledge of your affection, I could descend so low as to accept *money* from you, Josephine? Never! never!"

And having uttered this dignified speech Mr. Max Courtlandt made a profoundly respectful bow to the young girl and went away merrily jingling in his pocket the donation of his aunt. He felt all the refined satisfaction of a man who has made a stately and graceful speech, and performed at great self sacrifice a most disinterested action.

CHAPTER XIV.

WILLIAM LYTTTELTON ESQ., ATTORNEY AT LAW.

MAX hurried to Mr. Barlow's, and to his inexpressible satisfaction, found that the magical coat was still unsold. With the distrust of a man who has set his heart upon possessing a thing—which thing, is open for emulation's "thousand sons"—he had imagined, that the object of his desire, might possibly escape him. Might not some wealthy parvenu, basely taking advantage of his wealth, have bribed Mr. Barlow by a higher offer than his own? Might not Monsieur Pantoufle have preferred his prior claim? Might not Mr. Barlow's house have been reduced to ashes, while he was at his aunt's? As with a distrustful lover, so with Max. Nothing was improbable.

He counted out to Mr. Barlow the fifteen dollars, received the coat compactly wrapped up, and joyfully took his way home, there to exhibit his purchase to his cousin.

Nina was sitting in the middle of the room: Max threw the bundle on a chair and crying, "There it is!" sprang toward the girl. But he suddenly checked himself: Nina had a visitor.

This visitor was a tall, solemn-looking man, of twenty-five or thirty, clad in black, with black hair, black beard, and black eyes. He seemed to diffuse around him a pleasant odour of law-books and dusty parchments, and in the wrinkles around his close shut mouth, the three tomes of the Novelli might have lain concealed. This gentleman was no other than that Mr. William Lyttelton, whose legal thunder had assailed Max's ears when he left

the court-house. Mr. Lyttelton was emphatically a man of business—also a very successful and “rising” man, further, he had been spoken of for Congress—which various circumstances had not operated to his disfavor, with the fair damsels of Martinsburg, who, like many damsels, of many other places, then and now, were not averse to what is called high reputation. Mr. Lyttelton, it is true, was solemn, and rather dull; but he was a man of irreproachable character; was said to have defended the rights of more than one widow and orphan, without fee; and when aroused was capable of no ordinary display.

What had brought this legal gentleman to see Nina, Max was completely at a loss to understand; but he was soon enlightened on the subject.

“I will thank you, madam,” said Mr. Lyttelton in a sepulchral voice, after a stiff movement of his head toward the young man, “to inform your father that I called. It is absolutely necessary that we should have his deposition.”

“He will return in a day or two, sir,” said Nina.

“That will do, madam.”

“And I will tell him, sir.”

“You will oblige me, madam.”

Mr. Lyttelton rose.

“I have thought it unnecessary to have a summons served upon Mr. Von Horn by the proper officer—” he said:

“O, that is not necessary sir,” broke in Max in a business tone, “you know it is left entirely to—”

“Pardon me for interrupting you, sir,” said Mr. Lyttelton with the ghost of a smile, “what you say is very just.”

“I am studying law, Mr. Lyttelton,” said Max consequentially “and we of the profession—”

“Max, you are detaining Mr. Lyttelton,” said Nina laughing.

"Oh, not at all," observed that gentleman smiling; and although he had taken his hat, he lingered a moment.

"Hum!" said Mr. Lyttelton, gravely.

Nina smiled politely, as much as to say, "Did you speak, sir?"

"Hum!" repeated Mr. Lyttelton, looking out of the window, "we have a very fine day, madam."

And after this uncommon observation—for Mr. Lyttelton, that rigid business man, most extraordinary—the visitor took his leave.

Max burst into a laugh as soon as the door had fairly closed.

"What a post that is!" he said.

"A post, indeed! I wish you had half his mind!"

"What mind has he? Why, for nothing but law—law—law—"

"And is not that a very valuable sort, Mr. Impudence?"

"My dear Nina, I would thank you to recollect my baptismal name of Maximilian, when you do me the honor to address me. And I will add that you astonish me by uttering such sentiments. Is *law* all that men have to interest them in this world? Is a man to sleep, eat, drink, and play *law*? Law is a good thing—especially when it is for you in a case—an excellent thing; but law is not the sole thing man was placed upon the earth to give his thoughts and all to, my dearest Nina."

"I'll thank you to drop that mode of addressing me, sir."

"Now, observe this Mr. Lyttelton," continued Max philosophically, "he is a mere lawyer—a walking volume of his namesake old Coke Lyttelton. He has no idea of any thing but declarations, statutes, pleas, replications, rejoinders, and sur-rejoinders. The sun does not shine for him; the birds are a vexatious interruption to his studies, when bending over his dusty papers he hears their singing; he does not feel in his stony heart an

emotion of pleasure, even at gazing on your lovely face, my dear Nina. There is my quarrel with him; he is utterly unsocial—business alone is his god—miserable *business*,” said Max, as if the very word were distasteful.

“Unsocial, indeed,” said Nina, “I wonder if he did not say it was fine weather.”

“Do you call that—”

“Has he been as polite as that to any other girl in town?” asked Nina, forgetting completely her train of argument.

“Why, you are setting your cap at him!” said her cousin.

Nina laughed, and turned the conversation.

“How in the world did you get your hair powdered,” she said.

“Monsieur Pantoufle did it—I’ve won my bet, charming Nina.”

“On your honor now, Max?”

“On my honor, madam,” said Max, bowing and laying his hand on his heart.

“Well, you do coax people! I suppose Monsieur Pantoufle consented just to get rid of you.”

“Not at all, Nina—he insisted on it, contrary to my wishes,” said Max, “but it seems to me there was a bet. A box on the ears against a cap and feather. I’ve won.”

“Your cap is finished—look up-stairs in your room on the table. What is in that bundle? I hav’n’t asked you.”

“Look for yourself,” said Max, running up-stairs.

As Nina was opening the bundle, a knock was heard at the door, and Mr. Hans Huddleshingle entered the apartment

CHAPTER XV.

HANS HUDDLESHINGLE, ESQ.

"Good morning, Miss Nina," said Mr. Huddleshingle, with a movement of his head, which approached as near to a bow as this phlegmatic gentleman was capable of making it, "I was passing by, and thought I would come in and see you this bright morning."

"It is a very fine day, sir," said Nina, coldly, and stiffly sitting down, with a glance at Mr. Huddleshingle's personal adornments, which conveyed plainly to that gentleman, the fact that she had seen through his pretense of coming in incidentally, as he was "passing by."

To explain this conduct a word is necessary. Mr. Huddleshingle was one of Nina's most devoted admirers—and though his "good estate," and purity of (German) blood, had made him rather popular with the young ladies of the quarter, he was not in the least liked by Nina. She had signified this dislike so often that she began to experience a feeling of resentment at Mr. Huddleshingle's repeated visits—that gentleman having either not perceived, or declining to perceive, the light in which his attentions were regarded.

Her dislike was attributable to the fact, that Mr. Huddleshingle perseveringly monopolized her society at the social gatherings in the neighborhood, thereby excluding from her, all the more agreeable beaux who found it difficult to edge in a word while the young German's flood of phlegmatic commonplace was rolling on;—he was, moreover, undeniably wearying to a young girl of Nina's spirit;—in short, Mr. Huddleshingle was what in our own day, ladies (and other persons), call a *bore*. Add to

this, that her father had remonstrated with her for treating him so contemptuously, and the reasons for Nina's dislike of her visitor will be completely understood.

"It is a very fine day," said Mr. Huddleshingle, "and I have been up at the court-house all the morning attending to a case I have there, which I think, is the most barefaced claim against me I ever saw. I'll tell you how it commenced—"

"I never could understand legal points, sir," said Nina, impatiently.

"But this is very plain. It began with—"

"Mr. Huddleshingle, I have a headache to-day; I hope you will excuse me if I leave you. I will send Max down to entertain you—I am so stupid, I could not."

"If you have a headache I will not stay," said Mr. Huddleshingle, somewhat irate at the young girl's manner, "I suppose that wise-looking Mr. Lyttelton, who went away as I came up, gave it to you."

"No, sir—he did not."

"He's enough to give any one the headache."

"I see nothing in Mr. Lyttelton to produce such an effect, sir."

"Well, I'll go, Miss Nina, I see you have had a very agreeable visitor—this Mr. Lyttelton, and can't bear me after him. Good-morning."

"Good-morning, sir," said Nina, with contemptuous indifference. Mr. Huddleshingle left the room with wrath in his heart.

"I am glad Max was not here," said Nina to herself, when her visitor had disappeared. "He would have challenged Mr. Huddleshingle on the spot," she added, laughing. "Oh, what a tiresome, disagreeable person that is. On my word, I will not speak to him hereafter—no, that would offend father. I suppose I must."

And Nina returned to the bundle, as Max came out of his room, waving the new cap and shouting, "What a glorious, splendid feather!"

CHAPTER XVI.

MORE DIPLOMACY, AND HOW IT RESULTED.

THE young man entered in triumph, his long curling locks surmounted by a handsome velvet cap, from which floated a magnificent black feather.

"Nina," said he, "you are a peerless woman; I could not have desired a more beautiful cap than this. How did you manage to get it ready so soon?"

"I had the velvet and all."

"And the feather? But I see it is from your riding hat. And then this jewel! who would imagine it was your bracelet!"

"You seem to like the cap?"

"Like it! I am delighted with it! nothing could be more beautiful—except, indeed, my coat there."

"I have not got it out—this cord will never come untied."

"Break it—there!" cried Max, snapping the string and pulling out the richly finished coat, "did you ever see any thing more beautiful?"

"It is very pretty—where did you get it?"

"Ah, thereby hangs a tale," said Max, facetiously, "I have been unremittingly engaged in pursuit of that coat since I left you this morning. That garment, my dear Nina, is the reward of the highest generalship. It would be a long story—but it is worth the trouble I expended upon it."

"Well, I don't know how you could have come by it—honestly?"

"Oh, perfectly, Nina—I have, I believe, never robbed any thing but orchards; and I am inclined to think the owner, had I filched it, would identify his property next Thursday, since every body in town will be there. What lovely cuffs!"

"Very pretty—try it on."

Max drew himself up.

"Before you, madam—I disrobe before a lady?"

"Oh! you don't think of 'disrobing before a lady,' when you want me to mend your coat for you."

"That was in my boyish days, my dear Nina—when I was young and knew no better, Miss Von Horn; it would not be proper for me to sacrifice my dignity so wholly in presence of the lady who is to be my wife."

"Your wife, indeed—the wife of a boy like you!"

"That is just what I said to a friend of mine the other day—"

"What did you say?"

"He advised me to court you."

"Well, sir!"

"And I replied, as you have replied to me, 'What! court a *girl* like that!'"

"I wonder, Mr. Max, if girls are not women two years before boys are men. You are eighteen, and though I am seventeen I am a year your senior."

"True, true, I had forgotten that," returned Max, "it is undeniably true; in fact I have always said so."

"Said what?"

"That the female character matures sooner than that of the lords—the lords of creation."

"Pray, where did you get your fine ideas, Mr. Philosopher?"

"Experience, all experience, my dear Nina; I really ponder at times on these mysterious matters so deeply, that I feel at least sixty-five and look in the glass to see if I am not turning gray. You girls are like flowers—

we men," continued Max, with easy nonchalance, "are like trees. Long before we have arrived at our full development, the young ladies who were the delight of our youthful hours, who played with us—mere children—a few years back, these ladies like so many lovely flowers have budded and bloomed, and fallen from the stem into some outstretched arms; and we—we are alone. A sad world, my Nina!"

"I have not 'fallen from the stem' if I am your senior."

"My senior? Oh, then if you are really such an old woman as that, I'll try on the coat, though I know I am committing an impropriety. There, what do you think of it? coat, cap, and—"

"Bells—you should get the bells now. But it really is a very handsome dress. Where in the world did you get it?"

"It was made for Monsieur Pantoufle," said Max, prevaricating, "but Barlow sold it to me."

"With Monsieur Pantoufle's consent?"

"Oh, he thanked me for buying it. But I'll tell you how funnily Monsieur Pantoufle acted some other time. Now, my dear Nina, I have a serious proposal to make you; I am no longer in a jesting humor, for a great interest is at stake. You must act, too."

"I won't! what part could I take? I suppose after choosing little Sally Myers for your Juliet, you would have me to play some inferior character."

"No, my dear Nina—no, no! At one time it had occurred to me that you would make a charming Paris, but I abandoned that idea at once—you are too feminine, too gentle, you want spirit to ape a 'merry gentleman.'"

Nina seemed to be somewhat doubtful whether to take this as a compliment or a satire. Max continued.

"No, I had no intention of proposing to you a character in *Romeo and Juliet*, where, as you say, little Sally Myers already fills the chief female part;—you should

not, by-the-by, deride my choice of her, my Nina, for you know what strange stories are told of her mimicing powers, even in the nursery. That induced me to select her ; and, I assure you, nothing is more wonderful than the high dramatic talent the child conceals under her infantile manner. But I wander from the subject."

"Is that unusual?"

"No, Nina, I confess it—'tis not. But I will proceed to what I was about to say. The play of *Romeo and Juliet* is, you know, a tragedy."

Nina tossed her head.

"You think no one but yourself has read Shakspeare, I suppose?"

"No, no—but you interrupt me. I was going on to say, that when tragedies are performed, there is always another piece afterward ;—you know I have seen the actors in Philadelphia."

"Well, sir."

"Now, I want you to act an after-piece."

"I won't."

"Now, Nina !" said Max coaxingly, "it will go off so much better. I shall produce a dreadful effect on the audience with the poison, and vaults, and daggers, and all that—they will go home frightened, Nina. The after-piece ! the after-piece !"

"I will not."

Max sat down dejected.

"Well, I suppose I must abandon it," he said, sighing, "but I had set my heart on it."

"It is not necessary."

"No, no," said Max, mournfully, "but I could bear the disappointment but for one thing."

"What is that?"

"Your refusing me a trifle like that, Nina—and I ready to die for *you*."

"What could I act, in the name of goodness?"

"Nothing, nothing—that is to say, any thing, every thing with your genius. But let us dismiss the subject, Nina," said Max, much dejected.

"Max, you are the most ridiculous person in the world," said Nina, "what are you sighing so for?"

"Was I sighing?" asked Max, sadly, "I did feel some disappointment."

"At what—my refusal?"

"Oh, don't let us return to the subject; I have annoyed you too much already, Nina."

"Who said you had annoyed me; did I?"

"No, but I must have done so."

"Why?"

"You seemed so much opposed to what I said—but I know I was wrong. Excuse my troubling you, Nina."

Nina reflected a moment, then said, "What's the use of an after-piece?"

"None—none at all."

"What would it be?"

"A little comedy with two or three players, taking in all not more than fifteen minutes; but let me drop the subject, it is disagreeable to you."

"I think I might change my mind, Max, if the piece was what I would like."

"Would you?" cried Max, brightening up; "oh! Nina, you shall choose just what you want from all the play-books I can borrow. There is plenty of time between this and Thursday, is there not?"

"Plenty."

"Then any dress will do."

"I can fix all that."

"Nina, you are the dearest, sweetest girl in the universe!" cried Max, waltzing her round the room; in the course of which proceeding, he came with a whirl up against that sable matron, aunt Jenny, who just then entered with a pile of dishes.

“Have done, Max!” cried Nina, flushed with the rapid evolution—“see there! you liked to have thrown down all the things; and then, sir, you should have had no dinner.”

“I’m glad I did not,” said Max, “for I am getting very hungry. Come, Nina—if there is any one place where you conspicuously shine, it is at the foot of the table.”

“You at the head, I suppose.”

“Precisely; ’tis the husband’s place, my Nina.”

CHAPTER XVII.

FATHER VON HORN.

AT NIGHT the whole household were gathered round the fire-place in father Von Horn's great dining-room. In that large fire-place, between the handirons which raised their grotesquely-carved heads like towers, a bundle of twigs and pine splinters, dispelled with their cheerful blaze, and warmth, and merry crackling, the gloom, the chill, and the silence of the long autumn evening.

Hunter John Myers was there with his little daughter, and the rough old face, was such a pleasant face, as he held on his broad breast the bright head of the child! The red fire light streamed upon them, and enveloped them in that soft, rosy light, which filtrates through the evening clouds of August;—the small form of the child rested calmly and confidingly in those rugged arms—she seemed to have flown to that honest heart for refuge, and finding it, to be content. They might have been taken for some old Italian picture—for they did not move, except when the hunter's hand gently smoothed the soft silken hair, or the small arms clung closer around his shoulder.

Nina was sitting busily occupied with her needlework, and Barry, in a corner, was closely engaged at an obstinate problem in arithmetic. Max was nowhere to be seen.

"Father," said little Sally, looking up with her frank, tender eyes, "I was just thinking how I should like to see an Indian—you know you used to tell us so many

stories about them. Were they so bad, and were they ugly?"

The hunter laughed.

"The ugliest varmints to be seen on a summer day, daughter," he said, "and I've seen enough of 'em to know. Many's the time I have fought with them out on the border—"

"That was a long, long time ago, wasn't it, father? None of them ever came to Meadow Branch, you know."

"They've melted away off to the West this many a day, daughter; but what put the Injuns in your head?"

"I was just thinking about them so, father. Was there ever any Indians here in Martinsburg?"

"Plenty, plenty, and I could tell you many stories about their doings when I was a boy. Old Courtlandt the tall, up there"—the hunter pointed to a portrait hanging over the fire-place—"and me, went out often in the woods here when I was a boy, and many a narrow escape we had. He was a brave man, and that's the face for all the world."

"Don't you think it's like Barry, father?"

"Why, now I come to look at it good, there is the very same look out of the eyes."

Barry, hearing his name called, turned round.

"Why, Barry's Courtlandt Von Horn all over again," he cried, "just like what he was! Ah, Barry, you have an easier time now than we did in the old days. Then it was all fighting—now it's all playing."

"Do you mean our play acting, father?" asked the child.

"No, daughter," said the hunter, "I mean every thing is softer, and pleasanter, and easier now. Why, in the old time there was not a road to be seen any where, and now you have a regular stage to the water;—and you have your letters; seems to me," added the hunter, laugh-

ing, "I should like some body to write me a letter, though I just can read."

"Could *he* read?" asked the child, pointing to the portrait.

"Not a word," said the hunter.

"But Barry can, father; he ain't like him in that."

"Barry is all the better for it, daughter. Ah, all you young folks have great privileges;—you ought to thank Providence for 'em. Providence has done much for you, and I'm in hopes to see schools all over the land yet."

"We have enough in Martinsburg, sir," said Nina, "and we have more yet. We have a real Paris dancing-master, Monsieur Pantoufle. And that reminds me that he has not been to give me my music lesson to-day."

As she was speaking a knock was heard at the door, and Barry going to open it, the very gentleman in question was ushered in.

Monsieur Pantoufle, with his cocked hat pressed upon his heart, and his head gently turned over his right shoulder, saluted the company with a profound bow.

"Mademoiselle Nina," he said, with a most amiable smile, "I have great happiness in seeing you look so charming, so fresh. Monsieur," he added, to the hunter, "I am rejoice to see you."

Room was made for Monsieur Pantoufle; and little Sally was about to slide into her corner, but her father held her tight.

"The little thing is coming to be a real fine lady," said the hunter, smiling tenderly on her, "Mr. Pantoufle won't mind your sitting on your old father's knee, child."

"A beautiful sight," said Monsieur Pantoufle, with a sad smile, and something like a sigh, "I love the young people much, *hélas!* very much!"

"You did not bring me that pretty minuet you promised me, Monsieur Pantoufle," said Nina, "you promised it to-day."

"Oh, pardon Ma'mselle," replied the gentleman, smiling and shrugging his shoulders, "I was so engage to-day."

"Very busy, sir?"

"Ah yes, Monsieur Max, your cousin, Ma'mselle, has made me fence—you comprehend, with sword—all the day."

"Oh, I understand—"

"Ma'mselle said—?"

"It is for his play."

"His play—ah yes; he act *Romeo*, is it not so?"

"Yes, sir—and there is Juliet," said Nina, laughingly pointing to the child.

"What a charming Juliet! I think I have never seen more charming Juliet."

Little Sally blushed.

"I am to act too, sir," said Nina.

"Oh, are you?" cried the child.

"Yes, dear, after you, you know."

"Oh, I'm so glad!"

Barry raised his head, listening attentively

"What's the matter, Barry?" asked Nina.

"I thought I heard Burt's footstep, cousin Nina."

"Father! could it be father!" cried Nina, jumping up.

She ran to the door, and opening it was received into two stalwart arms, and saluted by a hearty and loud sounding kiss; at the same moment a cheerful voice uttered the words:

"Well, good people!"

Father Von Horn, who now entered, was a bluff old gentleman of decidedly Dutch figure, about the same age as hunter John Myers. There was no similarity, however, between these two men. Hunter John was completely English, Virginian, in the character of his person—father Von Horn was as wholly Teutonic. His face was broad and red, his person corpulent, his voice guttural, and suitable for the difficult *ich's* and diphthongs of

Fatherland. There was great dignity, however, united with this bluff person—and no gentleman in the land was more refined, or better bred, than Jacob Von Horn. Opulent in his circumstances, and with a clear, just mind, studiously cultivated by the best English and German literature, it was impossible to class him with those illiterate, and narrow-minded representatives of his nation so often met with. Father Von Horn was a good German gentleman, and no one had ever been ten minutes in his company, without ascertaining as much. If we add, that the old man was a warm admirer of every thing German, and inherited all the superstition of his sturdy mountain ancestry, this sketch of him will be sufficient for the moment.

Hunter John grasped the old man's hand with friendly warmth.

"Well, you got through soon, neighbor," said the hunter.

"Yes, neighbor Myers, I wanted to get down and see you all. Where's Max?"

"Out visiting somebody, father," said Nina, taking his hat and gloves.

"Ah, the dog! he'll never stay at home and study. Wasn't Barry there just now?"

"He's gone to see that Burt is attended to, father."

"Good boy! Well, Mr. Pantoufle, I'm pleased to see you; I hope your music gets on, Nina."

And father Von Horn seemed as much pleased, and as greatly bent on asking questions, as if he had been absent a year instead of a fortnight.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE RED BOOK.

AND now who should come in, clad in his visiting suit, and showing on his stolid countenance no trace of the morning quarrel with Nina, but Mr. Hans Huddleshingle!

"Ah, Hans! I am glad to see you," cried father Von Horn, grasping him heartily by the hand. "Sit down! Nina, don't trouble yourself so much—I am not hungry."

For Nina was very busily engaged preparing supper for her father; so busily indeed that she had scarcely found time to greet Mr. Huddleshingle with a distant bow. Soon the table was set, and a substantial meal spread upon it—to which father Von Horn, despite his assurance of a want of appetite, did appropriate honor.

"Ah, Nina," said the old man, with his mouth full, "there you are, behind the cups and saucers, like a veritable matron. Some day you will marry and leave your old father—that will be a bad day for him: he will not know what to do without you."

"I never intend to marry, sir."

"Never marry!"

"No, indeed," said Nina, smilingly, twisting a curl around her finger.

"Not marry!" repeated father Von Horn, "not be in the *Red Book*?"

"It never shall be opened for me. I'm sure grandfather Courtlandt up there, would stop any such thing: we should see his ghost," replied the young girl, laughing.

Father Von Horn's face became serious.

"Don't jest about such things daughter," said he, "I pray you do not."

"*Livre rouge*?—ah, what is that?" asked M. Pantoufle, with a polite smile.

"It is our family record, Mr. Pantoufle," father Von Horn replied—"in it are written all the marriages of the family: it contains our genealogical tree, on both sides of the house, far back into the past."

"Possible!" ejaculated M. Pantoufle, "but, Ma'mselle Nina, you speak of a ghost, is it not so? what is that?"

"Father will tell you, sir."

M. Pantoufle turned to the old man, with a courteous look of inquiry.

"Nina was speaking of one of the traditions of our family, sir," said father Von Horn, very gravely; "it is this. When a marriage is about to take place among us, which is likely to be unlucky, or unfortunate, for some reason we know naught of, our ancestors—"

Father Von Horn paused.

Mr. Huddleshingle bent forward, listening.

"The ancestors—they—" said M. Pantoufle, inquiringly.

"Well, I see no harm in telling any one. The dead men haunt their graves, and so forbid it. Let any one disregard that warning! Ruin and sorrow, fall upon their roofs!"

Hunter John, listened to these words with gloomy interest.

"I have known that thing to happen to German families," said he, in a low tone, and very thoughtfully.

A dead silence followed these words: father Von Horn rose from the table.

"Come neighbors!" he said, "let us not talk on such subjects: they are not cheerful. Friend Hans, what are

you thinking of—come, a penny for your thoughts, as the children say!”

“Nothing, nothing,” said Mr. Huddleshingle, in great confusion.

“Well: now daughter Sally what are *you* thinking of?” asked the old man of the little girl, “I am sure, of your play, daughter. What a pretty Juliet she will make, neighbor Myers.”

“They said something about her killing herself, neighbor,” observed the hunter, looking fondly at the small, smiling face, “what is it?”

“That’s a part of the play—but it’s all pretense. It is nice fun, isn’t it, Sally?”

“Oh, yes, sir—I know how to kill myself very well now. Mr. Max, has shown me how.”

“What a wild dog that Max is,” said the old man, “the idea of his selecting you: why not take Nina?”

“I shall act too, father.”

“You!”

“Yes—in the other piece.”

“Oh, I’m so glad,” cried little Sally, “I didn’t much like, to be alone.”

“Hans,” said father Von Horn, couldn’t you appear too—with Nina, say?”

“If Miss Nina says so, sir.”

“Max arranges every thing,” said Nina, “Mr. Huddleshingle must not apply to me.” And Nina devoutly resolved, that Max should have his orders to exclude Mr. Hans, that very evening.

“Well, well,” replied her father; “we’ll have all arranged, no doubt, just as it should be. Neighbor Myers, you don’t leave Martinsburg before it?”

“No, no,” said hunter John, “I must be there to have my eyes on the little bird here. I’m most nigh afraid she’s going to kill herself in earnest.”

“Never fear—well, you shall come and stay with us.

No refusal! we can make you more comfortable here, than you are at the "Globe." I'll see to Elkhorn in the morning. The house is big enough."

And so with familiar talk, the old man beguiled the time, until the visitors, one by one, took their leave: M. Pantoufle bowing, smiling, and retreating scientifically backward: Mr. Huddleshingle in unwonted abstraction: hunter John, with his eyes fixed with a last tender look on his little daughter, who ran and put her arms round his neck, to have another kiss. It had been arranged, that the child should stay for the night, with Nina; with whom she was a favorite.

CHAPTER XIX.

MAX DREAMS OF BOOTS, AND YIELDS TO THE TEMPTER.

“WHAT a dream I have had,” said Mr. Max Courtlandt, waking with a laugh, two or three days after the scene in the last chapter. “I thought I was in a universe of boots, a chaos of all imaginable styles of boots. Certainly,” he added, “there was some sense in dreaming about them, since having attained all the other articles for my dress, the coat, the cap, the feather, the waistcoat, the ‘silken hose,’ as the nice folks call them, and the sword—there now remains but a single thing to find.—That is my boots,” continued Max, thoughtfully. “Boots! what are boots that I should be so overcome by the dreadful idea; that I should dream of them, that they should fill my nightly thoughts, and waking dreams?”

Max sprung up and dressed; this operation somewhat interrupted the train of his reflections. But, standing before the glass, contemplating the effect of the Romeo cap, which he had placed gracefully on his head, the subject which had tormented him in slumber, returned in all its original strength.

“Boots are not difficult to find,” he mused, “many persons have boots—I had a pair myself once, and only discarded them, because, being unable to afford fair top-boots, I would not be content to put up with ordinary ones. Could I not buy a pair? No, I have no money. Could I not borrow them from some one? No, why should I, from modesty, conceal the fact, that my foot is a most

elegant, and slender foot—in fact an exceedingly aristocratic foot: a real woman's foot, which no doubt arises from my purity of blood. What shall I do? I can not borrow—no one has a pair small enough. I can not buy, for my money is all gone, and I will not ask uncle for any more; or aunt Courtlandt either.

“Aunt Courtlandt!” soliloquized the young man, “what idea was that which occurred to me the other day at the convent? an improper idea, in its nature felonious and criminal! Shall I ask for them? and be refused? No I must not. Shall I—no that is wrong. But let me reflect. In this singular world many persons can well do without what they, nevertheless, set great store by, thinking the thing wholly indispensable. Were they asked to part with it—they would refuse: were they deprived of it, little inconvenience would result. Let me see then. What would be the consequence if I yielded to this temptation—to which I foresee, I shall wholly yield? Why a night's inconvenience—at the most.

“Shall I then?” asked Max of himself in the glass. That individual smiled: the very cap-feather seemed to laugh an approval.

“I'll do it!” said Max, resolutely; “faint heart never won ought yet. Let's see for means. Oh, mischief, thou art swift.” And murmuring these words our hero descended to breakfast.

CHAPTER XX.

MRS. COURTLANDT PLAYS A MINUET FOR THE YOUNG PEOPLE,
AND WHAT ENSUED.

MRS. COURTLANDT was in her lecture-room, engaged as usual in trying experiments with her apparatus, when Prudence informed her that her nephew was in the parlor.

"Come in, nephew," said the lady's voice, "you need not stand on ceremony."

Max entered.

"Oh, good-evening, aunt," he said, "I knew I should find you unemployed. School-hours are the busy ones—are they not?"

"Yes, I receive no visitors in school-hours."

"How are you to-day?"

"Very well—except that I am much fatigued from riding over to see a sick family on the Opequon."

"Aunt you are very good. Why don't you make some of your scholars go for you, and carry the medicine?"

"I prefer going myself."

"Besides, I ought to have reflected that they are all too wild and thoughtless."

"No, not all of them."

"Still, a great many are: Josephine—my particular friend, you know, aunt—Josephine is as wild as a deer."

"Indeed you mistake, nephew. She has a great flow of spirits, but is as good a little creature, and as obedient as possible. She loves me, I believe, most sincerely."

"Who does not?"

"Come nephew, there goes your tongue again. Your tongue, and your feet, seem made to be constantly in motion."

"I do talk too much, aunt," said Max, "but exercise, walking, and all that, is good for one, you know."

"Dancing, you think too?"

"Oh yes, dancing! and that reminds me how I long for a little dance. It does seem to me, that I can not get any one, to dance with me. I was at Mrs. ——'s last night, and none of the girls—Oh! but aunt!" cried Max, breaking off, "the place to play in is changed. Just think: Mrs. ——, says her parlor is not large enough, and she is going to have the examination and exhibition and all, at the "*Globe*."

"Mr. Gaither's?"

"Yes, yes, in the big dining-room. A platform is to be erected, and all."

"Well, it is a better place—much."

"So I think—but imagine, my respected aunt, what an honor it is for your unworthy nephew, to play Shakspeare in *the Globe*."

"Why?"

"Why, it was the *Globe* you know, where Shakspeare himself acted."

"From which you conclude, I suppose," said Mrs. Courtlandt, "that you are another Shakspeare?"

"Who knows?" said Max, audaciously.

This reply of her nephew actually brought a smile from Mrs. Courtlandt: in the midst of which Miss Josephine Emberton made her appearance at the door.

"May I come in, ma'am?" asked Josephine.

"Yes, Josephine; there is no one here but my nephew."

"Whom she came to see," added Max.

"Indeed I didn't," said the girl, "you always think I come to see you."

"Well, Miss Josephine," said Max, "we will not quarrel" (indeed, it was necessary, as the reader will perceive that he should remain on the very best terms with Miss Josephine), "we will not quarrel about that. I know if you were any where, I should, for that very reason go thither; there, does that satisfy you. Come, let us have a minuet. I know my well-beloved aunt will play for us."

Josephine with longing eyes turned to Mrs. Courtlandt. She was passionately fond of dancing, especially of the minuet. Mrs. Courtlandt hesitated.

"Do come and play for us, most respected of your sex," said Max, "Josephine, or Miss Josephine dances so nicely; the harpsichord will do."

"And I would rather have you to play for us, ma'am, than any body in the world," said Josephine, sincerely.

This gained over the outwardly austere, but really yielding, Mrs. Courtlandt.

"Well, children, come," she said, "you two would persuade any body."

Max relented from his purpose, and half crushed a small object in his pocket.

"I do repent me," murmured he, dejectedly. But at that moment he caught sight of the magical boots on his aunt's feet, as she slightly lifted her skirt to ascend the step leading to the parlor. This spectacle completely overturned all our hero's good resolutions; overcome again by the temptation, there was now no longer any room for repentance.

Mrs. Courtlandt took her seat at the harpsichord and commenced a minuet. Max advanced to the spot where Josephine with a stately air had taken her seat too, and with one hand on his heart bowed low, and requested the honor of treading a measure with her. To which the young girl, smothering a laugh, with stately condescension, and a ceremonious "with pleasure, sir!" consented, giving him her hand.

Then commenced that royal dance, which we in our day laugh at—calling it “stiff,” and “odd,” and “ridiculous.” Young ladies now wonder at the very idea of the minuet, comparing its stately measured motion, with the fast-whirling waltz and polka; and young gentlemen make very merry over it to their fair partners, held in the pleasant close embrace, of the said waltz or polka. Our grandmothers—unhappy beings—knew nothing of the polka, and would have positively objected to having around their waists some perfect stranger’s arm. In modern parlance, those old folks were “slow”—and the minuet, being a slow dance, most probably suited them on that account.

Max and Josephine danced well. They were both naturally graceful, and had practiced much. His bows were very elegant, and full of chivalric and profound respect;—her courtesies (each fair hand holding up her skirt, stretched gracefully to its full width), replete with winning grace, and, as Max inwardly decided, the very poetry of motion.

They approached each other for the final movement, Max with an elegant mincingness in his gait, Josephine gliding with the pleasant, stately music like some little fairy queen. Then it was that Max took from his pocket a small, neatly folded note, and as he extended with graceful ease his hand, slipped the said note into Miss Josephine’s, where the full ruffles falling down, concealed it. The dance ended. Mrs. Courtlandt turned round,

“Just in time,” muttered Max, “I do repent me still!”

“What did you say, nephew?”

“Oh, nothing, aunt!”

“Josephine, you dance very well,” said the lady, “I really see no necessity for M. Pantoufle’s giving you lessons in the minuet.”

Josephine laughed, and blushed.

"Nor to Max.—I observed the elegance with which he approaches and gives his hand—"

"Oh, my dear aunt—"

"And how elegantly you, Josephine, receive it. Now children I must spend no more time in trifles—I have my duties. Good-morning, nephew."

Max with terrible doubts upon the subject of his note, felt that this was a dismissal from the convent. He therefore took his leave, with many misgivings, and returned homeward.

Once in his room he began to reflect whether his aunt had discovered his surreptitious act—or whether his guilty conscience had given an imaginary meaning to her words of parting—these were the questions. He was thus sunken fathoms deep in thought, when he heard himself called by Nina.

"What is it, my dear Nina?" he said opening the door with a look of quiet, and profound sadness.

"Here is a message from aunt Courtlandt," said Nina.

"From aunt Courtlandt!" murmured Max, with guilty fear, "bid the messenger ascend."

"It is Prudence, and she has something for you."

"Prudence, what bring you?"

"Here's a bundle and note from Miss Courtlandt," said Prudence, delivering a brown paper parcel.

Max took it.

"She didn't want any answer," said Prudence, with a sly laugh: and then that young lady retreated through the open door. Max ran up to his room and tore open the bundle.

His aunt's boots!

Max tore open the note: therein he read the following:

"You are very foolish Max. Why did you take all the trouble to write that note? Besides, I disapprove of

such things. You must not write to my scholars. I know it was a jest, but it was wrong. I saw you in the mirror over the harpsichord, and Josephine gave me the note. I send my boots, as you call them. Why did you not ask for them? Always ask me for what you want. If it is in my power I will refuse you nothing that I can properly grant. You are very welcome to the shoes.

“Your affectionate,

“AUNT COURTLANDT.”

“Most excellent of her sex!” cried Max, “to think of being so completely done up by her. But here are my boots—my boots!”

And Max tried them on. They were somewhat tight, but answered to perfection. Max sat down admiring them.

“Seriously though, aunt Courtlandt is an excellent woman,” said he. “For me to ask Josephine to steal these boots; for my aunt to find it out; for the injured person to send the object of the intended theft! Oh, I am ashamed of myself. I am getting bad-hearted.”

“She knows it was all a joke, however!” cried Max, reassured—“but these elegant boots—*they* are *no* joke!”

CHAPTER XXI.

AT THE "GLOBE."

THE Thursday, on the evening of which Max was to make his first appearance on any stage, arrived in due course of time. It was a pleasant day, and a pleasant evening—and all Martinsburg appeared to be in motion toward the "Globe."

The reader may fancy, that we have created this name for dramatic point, but such is not the fact. The "Globe" was as real, as the convent of the Sisters of Mercy; as veritable as M. Pantoufle, or hunter John Myers; and many persons now living will well recollect the excellent and obliging host, Mr. Ephraim Gaither, to whose courtesy the Martinsburgers were on this occasion indebted for the large and commodious saloon in which the examination of Mrs. ——'s scholars and the other exercises of the day were about to take place.

The "Globe" was a building of considerable size standing just opposite the court-house, and had the reputation of being the best inn, as Mr. Gaither had the reputation of being the prince of landlords for twenty miles around. The most remarkable thing about the tavern, however, was its dancing-room, in which all the balls of the time had been held. It was an apartment of extraordinary size, taking up nearly the whole ground floor of the building; and in this room on a platform raised some feet above the floor, and draped with curtains, our hero was about to make his appearance.

All Martinsburg had assembled at the announcement—elegantly dressed ladies, radiant with rich falling lace, and supporting on their white foreheads curiously fashioned towers of hair; gracefully attentive gentlemen with powdered locks, stiff-collared coats, and silk stockings and knee-buckles; shop-keepers, countrymen, and in the obscure distance, behind all, no slight sprinkling of laughing ebon faces;—such was the audience which Mr. Max, out of his abundant good-nature, had consented to appear before, when the regular examination was gone through with.

The room was packed full. Conspicuous on the front seats, eager to applaud as ever were the friends of actor, sat father Von Horn; and Mrs. Courtlandt (behind her, Josephine, and other of her scholars); and hunter John, come to see little Juliet; and squeezed in one corner, Barry, who waited, trembling, for the moment when little Sally must appear before that vast assemblage of expectant eyes, and go through with her part. Barry felt sure, that *he* should never be able to utter a word.

The examination of the scholars, was altogether very gratifying to the pride of Mrs. —, and of their fond parents, who listened admiringly to their sons and daughters, answering without mistake or hesitation complex questions in geography, arithmetic, and even astronomy, and algebra, and geometry.

Under the small fingers which grasped manfully the blackboard chalk, the difficult problems in geometry, astronomy, and algebra, “rounded with flawless demonstration.” The “young Norvals” detailed the occupations of their fathers, Hamlet soliloquized on human life, and all the ills that flesh is heir to, Wolsey gave feeling advice to Cromwell, and the little bright-faced girls laughed out their answers to every question, as if knowledge was mere amusement, and it was so funny in Mrs. — to think they could be ignorant of such well-known things!

The examination was decidedly successful, and scarcely any scholar missed getting his or her silver medal—with “MERIT” graven on it—which very naturally delighted their fond parents, and made them think that Mrs. —— was the princess of school-mistresses, and then and there, resolve to send to her their children always.

Then, the examination being ended, a large curtain was let down before the platform; and through the vast crowd ran a murmurous humming sound, such as some autumn breeze arouses in the dry leaves of the forest trees. Silks rustled, the gayly decorated forms undulated like waves, and all awaited the moment, when the rising curtain should reveal to them the “gentle Romeo.” Well might little Barry hold his breath, and think how he would feel!

CHAPTER XXII.

THE PLAY, AND IN WHAT MANNER IT WAS INTERRUPTED.

THE curtain rose, and Romeo made his appearance in the midst of a deathlike pause.

If our readers have come to the conclusion, that Mr. Max Courtlandt was only an ordinary "rattle-trap," with a voluble tongue, a handsome face, and a faculty of coaxing persons into doing what at the moment he desired them to do, they have done that young gentleman very great injustice. Max Courtlandt's was no ordinary mind; to a facility in taking impressions on all sides, he united an individuality of character, as distinctly marked as any even the most unmistakably individual in that vast audience. He seemed careless, thoughtless, light in temperament as the down of the thistle tossed about hither and thither by the slightest breath of wind;—in reality, no more sadly thoughtful mind, when his exuberant health did not fire his blood, could be conceived.

Max Courtlandt was no common jester; he often uttered with a laugh, sad truths. He was no mere wheedler of people, as Nina said; from a low opinion of human nature, practicing on its foibles; true, he saw through these foibles and made merry with them; but a kinder, softer, more hopeful, humanity-loving, humanity-admiring heart could not be found. Our readers, therefore, have too lightly rated the character of this young man if seeing him impressible and volatile, they have conceived

him to be shallow ; if from hearing him jest always, they have concluded that life to his thoughtless mind was but a jest.

It had been predicted by some, that he would, on his appearance before the audience as Romeo, salute them with a burst of laughter, from pure inability to overcome the humor of the contrast. Mistaken idea ! This boy was capable of greater things than keeping countenance in presence of a mere crowd, ready to laugh at him.

The Romeo who appeared was the Romeo of Shakespeare ; his griefs, his love—the course of which had run so roughly—and his mortal purpose plainly written in his face. Still a calm face, very calm—thoughtful, dreamy, “sicklied o’er” with doubts of every thing, even whether the phantasmagoria around him *were* phantasmagoria—or mere phantom phantoms !—a dream within a dream, all to dissolve before long, leaving no trace !

Romeo advanced, chaining the large assemblage with his melancholy eye—dreamy, and full of melting sadness. Then turning to Balthasar lost in the shadow, he uttered in the deep tone of overwhelming woe, those heart-broken words :

“ Is it even so ? Then I defy you, stars ! ”

Balthasar, who has raised this tempest of affliction, by the intelligence of Juliet’s death, goes out—the apothecary enters, and in reply to the demand for poison, pleads the Mantuan law of death against vending such. Romeo, with a scornful look, asks :

“ Art thou so bare, and full of wretchedness,
And fear’st to die ? famine is in thy cheeks,
Need and oppression stareth in thy eyes,
Upon thy back, hangs ragged misery.
The world is not thy friend, nor the world’s law.

.....
There is thy gold ! worse poison to men’s souls,
Doing more murders in this loathsome world
Than these poor compounds that thou may’st not sell.
I sell thee poison : thou hast sold me none ! ”

The tone with which these latter words were uttered, electrified the audience: "this loathsome world," expressed all the mournful fortunes, all the gloomy horror of a despairing shipwrecked soul.

Then the scene shifted to the tomb of Juliet. Romeo and Balthasar stand before it: Romeo takes the iron from his servant's hand shuddering.

"Give me that mattock and the wrenching iron.
 Upon thy life I charge thee
 Whate'er thou hear'st or seest stand all aloof,
 And do not interrupt me in my course.
 Why I descend into this bed of death
 Is, partly to behold my lady's face;
 But chiefly to take thence from her dead finger
 A precious ring; a ring that I must use
 In dear employment: therefore hence! begone!
 But if thou, jealous, dost return to pry
 In what I further shall intend to do—
 By heaven! I will tear thee joint by joint,
 And strew this hungry church-yard with thy limbs.
 The time and my intents are savage-wild!
 More fierce and more inexorable far
 Than empty tigers or the roaring sea!"

Balthasar starts back at these terribly passionate words, frightened at the glittering sword, which leaps from its scabbard, and flashes in his eyes. Romeo left alone gazes with heaving breast, on the tomb of Juliet: then pale, shuddering, with clenched teeth wrenches open the vault, murmuring:

"Thou detestable maw! thou womb of death!
 Gorg'd with the dearest morsel of the earth,
 Thus I enforce thy rotten jaws to open!
 And, in despite, I'll cram thee with more food!"

Hearing a noise he starts, and turns round with fiery, affrighted eyes. Paris with drawn sword stands before him.

"Stop thy unhallowed toil, vile Montague:
 Can vengeance be pursued further than death?
 Condemned villain, I do apprehend thee:
 Obey and go with me; for thou must die."

Romeo shrinks not before the threatening sword point ; but meets the eye of Paris with a scornful calmness.

"I must indeed : and therefore came I hither.—
 Good gentle youth, tempt not a desperate man ;
 Fly hence and leave me : think upon those gone ;
 Heap not another sin upon my head
 By urging me to fury. O, begone :
 By heaven, I love thee better than myself.
 For I come hither armed against myself.
 Stay not : begone : live, and hereafter say—
 A madman's mercy bade thee run away."

Paris sword in hand, throws himself upon Romeo.

"I do defy thy conjurations,
 And do attach thee as a felon here !"

Romeo, with a whirl of his sword dashes aside the murderous point just as it touches his breast.

"Wilt thou provoke me ? then have at thee, boy !"

They commence the mortal combat with flashing eyes, close pressed lips, hatred driven to fury. Romeo runs his adversary through the heart—he falls with a groan of anguish.

"O, I am slain ! If thou be merciful
 Open the tomb : lay me with Juliet !"

Romeo gazes steadfastly on the writhing body of his adversary. Then kneeling, pale and overcome by some sudden memory, he takes the dying man's hand. He starts, one hand on his cold brow.

"Let me peruse this face,
 Mercutio's kinsman ! noble County Paris !—
 What said my man, when my betossed soul
 Did not attend him, as we rode—I think
 He told me Paris should have married Juliet !
 O give me thy hand !
 One writ with me in sour misfortune's book !
 I'll bury thee in a triumphant grave,
 For here lies Juliet ! and her beauty makes
 This vault a feasting presence full of light !
 Death lie thou there by a dead man interred !"

He lays the body in the monument, then reappears with the smile of incipient madness, but shuddering beneath that ice-like merriment ; he has seen in the tomb, a sight

to freeze his blood. His head bent back, his brow streaming with cold sweat, his lips move, and he whispers almost:

“How oft, when men are at the point of death
Have they been merry! which their keepers call
A lightning before death! Oh, how may I
Call this a lightning?”

He turns trembling, with clasped hands, toward the tomb; a passionate sob tears his breast in its passage.

“O, my love! my wife!
Death that hath sucked the honey of thy breath,
Hath had no power yet upon thy beauty!
Thou art not conquered! Beauty’s ensign yet
Is crimson in thy lips, and in thy cheeks!
And death’s pale flag is not advanced there!”

He falls upon his knees covering his face; then raising his head again, gazes deeper into the tomb.

“Tybalt, liest thou there in thy bloody sheet,
Oh, what more favor can I do to thee?
Than with that hand that cut thy youth in twain,
To sunder his, that was thine enemy—
Forgive me, cousin!”

Starting up, he advances to the entrance of the vault and kneels, sobbing and murmuring:

“Ah, dear Juliet!
Why art thou yet so fair? Shall I believe
That unsubstantial death is amorous!
For fear of that, I will still stay with thee,
And never from this palace of dim night
Depart again; here, here, will I remain
With worms that are thy chambermaids: Oh, here
Will I set up my everlasting rest,
And shake the yoke of inauspicious stars
From this world-wearied flesh!”

He bends toward the body, now no longer horrified but in love with death.

His arms encircle the dear form, his lips approach the pale cheek.

“Eyes, look your last!
Arms, take your last embrace; and lips, oh, you

The doors of breath, seal with a righteous kiss
A dateless bargain to engrossing death !”

He rises, drawing from his pouch the flask of poison. Holding it up, he gazes upon it with eyes full of despair, love, and madness. “Come !” he groans,

“Come, bitter conduct ; come, unsavory guide !
Thou desperate pilot, now at once run on
The dashing rocks thy sea-sick weary bark !
Here’s to my love !”

He drains the flask of poison, staggers, drunk with the fiery potion ; and falls writhing, dead.

The audience, overcome by the profound reality of the scene, uttered no sound. A white form, weak, with feeble feet, rises from the vault. It is Juliet in her white clothes, with the undecided gaze of a person just awakened from sleep. She sees Romeo, and starts with a suppressed scream ; then throws herself on the body, yet “warm and newly dead.” The dreadful reality flashes across her eyes ; she sees the flask and clutches it.

“What’s here ! A cup clos’d in my true love’s hand.
Poison, I see, hath been his timeless end !
Oh, churl ! drink all and leave no friendly drop
To help me after ? I will kiss thy lips—
Haply some poison yet doth hang on them,
To make me die with a restorative.
Thy lips are warm !”

She starts up, sobbing with passionate anguish ; a noise is heard without ; she looks around, and seizes Romeo’s poignard.

“Yea, noise ! Then I’ll be brief : Oh, happy dagger !
This is thy sheath ! There rust and let me die !

Juliet stabs herself, and falls on the body of Romeo with a wild cry.

That cry was answered by another from the front benches—more passionate, frightful, terrifying than Juliet’s ; and the next moment, Barry pale and overcome with horror, sprang upon the platform, and running to

the child, caught her in his arms and raised her up. In the spot he had left, stood hunter John, pale and trembling.

For a moment the audience were too much astounded to comprehend the full significance of the scene; they seemed, however, suddenly, to realize how the boy had been carried away by the terrible reality of the performance; and then there arose one tremendous burst of applause, which shook the "Globe" from roof to foundation stone. The assemblage undulated like a stormy sea, a hundred voices clashed together, and in the midst of the most tremendous excitement the curtain fell upon the group, so picturesquely arranged.

It was a long time before order could be restored, or a hearing for the after-piece (as Max pompously called it), was thought of as attainable. In that piece the reader will recollect, Nina was to act a part—and this fact—in which was embraced an expectation—gradually quieted the tumult. By slow degrees the waves subsided, the voices were lowered, and soon only the low hum of comment upon the strange scene that had just been enacted, disturbed the silence.

It is not necessary for us to minutely trace Nina through her light comedy part, as we have done Mr. Max and little Sally, seduced by their remarkable performance on this occasion. Nina, and the other young ladies who played with her in these private theatricals, did their duty very manfully in presence of those laughing eyes—Nina, indeed, looking exceedingly beautiful.

But the second piece had its consequence more important than the strange incident of the first. If Barry proved by *his* conduct that little Sally was all in all to him—Mr. William Lyttelton proved by his own for days afterward, that Nina had made a complete conquest of him. Such was the plain and unmistakable fact. When Mr. Lyttelton went away with the delighted company, he felt

that he was no longer the heart-whole man he had been.

In an hour the vast room was empty. All had sought their homes, loud in their praises of the performance. Max was, if not a prophet in his native country, at least a hero for the moment.

Miss Josephine Emberton, at least, was of this opinion; and in coming out, Max read in her admiring looks, and her unusual quietness of manner, the effect his tragic performance of the part of Romeo had produced upon her feelings.

"You liked it, I hope, Miss Josephine?" he said.

"Oh, yes, you did it so well."

"Thank you."

"You did it admirably!"

"Praise from so fair a source, is praise indeed," said our hero, bowing low.

"See the fine chevalier!" laughed Miss Josephine, unable to suppress her besetting sin.

"Happy chevalier, if I am yours," said Max.

"Would you like to be my knight?"

"Yes, yes! How can you ask?"

"I promote you, then."

"But I must have a token of my lady's favor:—all knights have," said Max.

"A token—what sort?"

"Any thing; that pretty bracelet, say."

"Take it," said Josephine, merrily unclasping the bracelet from her white arm.

Max took it with a profound bow, and placed it in the pocket of his Romeo coat—which he had not removed—nearest his heart. After which, their respective parties calling them, the young girl and her companion separated, laughing. This trifling incident bore fruits in aftertimes.

CHAPTER XXIII.

SUPPER AFTER THE PLAY.

HALF an hour after the dispersion of the company, the household of father Von Horn, were gathered around his broad board, upon which was spread an excellent meal. Actors (even actors in private theatricals) are, it is well-known, very partial to suppers, and Max seemed to have gained an excellent appetite, for material things, from feeding so full of grief, in his character of Romeo.

Little Sally, who sat demurely by her pleased father's side, divided the honors of the evening, with our hero.

"How well she did play!" cried Max, with his mouthful, "I was astonished, to hear her speak her part so well; the best of it is, too, that the whole was her own, I did not teach her. Why Sally you did not seem in the least abashed: I declare, I have a great mind to come round and kiss you, only Barry would challenge me to mortal combat. Barry, what did you interrupt the performance in that way for?"

Barry blushed, and stammered out some indistinct words.

"Let Barry alone Max," said father Von Horn, "he was right, and I honor him for his chivalric conduct."

"Chivalric, sir?"

"Certainly: did he not think the child had killed herself?"

"I most nigh thought so myself," said hunter John, laughing: "and I was near doing as much as Barry."

"How well she did it!" said Nina.

"And Mr. Max most scared me, when he was fighting, you know: I most screamed."

"Screamed? What for?" asked Max.

"You seemed so much in earnest, Mr. Max," said Sally, nestling close to her father, with her little bright eyes fixed upon the young man.

"In earnest!" cried Max, "why, I was in earnest. At that moment, my dear Sally, I was Romeo, at the tomb of Juliet. I was Romeo, though, from the beginning."

"How do you mean, sir?"

"I mean, I forgot the company and all, after the first minute, my dear," said Max.

"Wasn't you scared?"

"The moment before I appeared, my charming Juliet—but not afterward. I did feel like laughing, when I saw that mischievous young lady, Miss Josephine smiling at me: but think of Romeo's laughing, on being told of your untimely end, little Sally."

"You mean Juliet's, sir," said Sally, laughing.

"You are Juliet—and I don't think it could have been played better. I had no idea you could do it so well. When you screamed, you know, I was very near reviving, and telling you not to be afraid, that I wasn't dead. And when you 'kissed my lips,' as the play says—to get some of the poison—for you know, you kissed me Sally—"

"Indeed I didn't, sir—I only made pretense."

"Listen to the little prude. By this hand you kissed me."

"Oh, Mr. Max!"

"Don't mind him, Sally," said Nina, "he always tells stories."

"By-the-by, Nina," said Max.

"Well, sir?"

"You did yourself considerable credit," said Max, patronizingly.

"Thank you, sir!"

"You did, indeed. True, Sally and myself were the prominent objects of interest, but I did not see more than a dozen persons yawning while you were going through your part."

"Yawning!" said Nina, indignantly.

"Max, you joke eternally," said father Von Horn, who listened to this jesting conversation with great amusement; "I say Nina, that you played excellently—quite as well as my nephew."

"Well, neighbor," said hunter John, "I don't repent comin' down to the play. I didn't know even what that was, till I saw 'em at it—but I soon made out the matter it was about, because little Sally was to be in it, you know, neighbor. Well, we old folks have much to learn. The young people are gettin' ahead of us. I must go back to my mountain valley, and tell the old dame all about it—how the child did her part," he added, looking with tender affection on the little bright face leaning upon his shoulder. "I'm glad to have seen it—I can now say, I have seen a regular play. Think of that."

"But you are not going back at once, neighbor?" asked father Von Horn.

"Yes, yes! I'm most afraid the game will get too pert, and think the old hunter's gun is witched, neighbor. Then, I can't breathe this low country air long, from living so entirely up in the hills. I'm tired of so many houses—but you won't think I'm tired of you all; or of you, daughter."

"Father, please stay a little longer—please," said little Sally.

"I can't, daughter, I must go to-morrow: I'm feeling that a deer hunt is in my blood."

"A deer hunt!" said Max, "I would give any thing

in the world to go and hunt a few days with you, sir!"

"Come then, my boy."

"But my law—uncle says—"

"I'm afraid you are neglecting it, Max," said father Von Horn.

"Yes sir, lately, I know—"

"With all this playing and visiting, and other things, Coke and Blackstone stand a bad chance."

"Well, sir, I suppose I ought—"

"No—if you have set your heart on going, you may as well go."

"I go in the morning," said hunter John.

"Well, neighbor, if you must, you must," the old man said; "and I suppose Max might as well go and get this acting out of his head. Now for prayers."

Prayers were said, and every one retired to rest. On the stairs Max passed Nina, who went up last, carrying in her dainty hand her japanned candlestick.

"I say, Nina," said Max, "don't be married before I get back."

"What do you mean?"

"Why, Messrs. Huddleshingle and Lyttelton are both smitten with you, Miss Nina. While you were acting I saw them—you know I was in the green-room, peeping through the curtain, there was a hole—"

"What did you see, you goose?" said Nina, smiling.

"I saw the beforementioned gentlemen devouring my amiable and handsome cousin with their glances. I really thought Hans Huddleshingle was going to make his fat, pinky eyes into saucers—"

"Foolishness!"

"And as for Mr. William Lyttelton—"

"What of him, pray?"

"He could not have gazed more attentively or showed more profound satisfaction, if he had just found some favor-

able authority in one of his cases, and was gloating over its graces and attractions. Nina, I am getting jealous: Nina, I am going away, and I can fancy the delight which the absence of so formidable a rival as myself will afford those sprightly and agreeable gentlemen. But Nina, I go in full confidence—in confidence as strong as ever Romeo felt in the faith of gentle Juliet, whom, by-the-by, you much resemble. Think of me often, Juliet—Nina, I should say,” Max continued dolefully, and casting a tender glance upon his cousin; “think of me often; not in the dim watches of the night alone, when ‘even the stars do wink as ’twere with over-watching,’ but even when the ‘garish day’ is bright, and you are surrounded by the most gallant cavaliers—the sprightly Lyttelton, and gay Huddleshingle. I am not afraid, my Nina; I have no fear that you will espouse a walking lawbook, or ever write your name Nina Huddleshingle! But still, I pray you, think of me—of me, your most devoted, your most loving—”

The closing of Nina’s door, clipped off the remainder of this most eloquent speech. Max also retired.

On the next day, hunter John, immediately after breakfast, had his horse brought, and declared that he must set out—though Meadow Branch valley was scarcely ten miles distant. He was evidently restless at the very thought of the great mountains, which, indeed, possess a mighty influence over those who have experienced their fascination. Hunter John, had been less than a week in Martinsburg, but was already *country-sick*.

Max made ready to accompany him; leaving with Nina many messages, and running about, with all the delight of a boy who has a holiday granted him, and the vision of woods and mountain-slopes before him. Romeo and Juliet; Josephine; Monsieur Pantoufle’s fencing lessons—all were forgotten, and Max, with his impulsive temper-

ament, saw for the moment nothing but guns, and hunting knives, and powder-flasks:—heard but the barking of the dogs, which frisking and wagging their tails, and leaping about, uttered at intervals, sonorous bayings, eloquent of mountain-side adventure.

If Max forgot Romeo and Juliet, however, hunter John, only half imitated him. He remembered Juliet. Father Von Horn's hand passed through the ordeal of the hunter's iron grasp, Nina and Barry were told good-by: and then the quondam Juliet—little Sally—ran to get the last word from him: and kiss him, crying at his going away. The old mountaineer raised the little form to his heart and held her there—a mere flower, a blossom so light was she—and again the old, gray, storm-beaten brow, rested on the bright rippling gold, and the red, tender cheek. He sat the child down: she covered her face, and began to cry. But Max jested with her, and made her laugh, and the dogs bayed more loudly, and good-by being said again, they mounted their horses.

“To the mountains!” cried Max, with sparkling eyes, “Oh, what a glorious sight, the fall woods are—and the deer!”

CHAPTER XXIV.

MR. HUDDLESHINGLE CONCEIVES AN IDEA : WITH THE CIRCUMSTANCES WHICH LED TO THAT PHENOMENON.

THE individual who monopolizes the whole conversation in an assemblage of many persons, his talk flowing on like a river which nothing can check, and absorbing such chance sentences as others utter, as easily and gracefully as a large stream absorbs into its bosom the little rills :—such a talkative personage, despite every thing, is apt to grow wearisome at last, and miss that attention which other more silent individuals command.

We are afraid that the sayings and doings of Mr. Max Courtlandt have filled too large a space in these pages, and that the reader will very willingly good-speed him on his journey to the mountains. Whether this be the case or not, we shall proceed to report the words, and actions of those other personages thrown by that impulsive gentleman, almost completely in the back-ground. Mr. Huddleshingle, with all his virtues, his peculiarities, his devoted admiration for our heroine, will now take his rightful place in this narrative, and perhaps act a more prominent part than Max has hitherto played, figure in a more striking catastrophe, than that which we have described as occurring at the “Globe :”—Mr. Lyttelton, that solemn devotee of legal lore, and prospective rival of our hero in the affections of Nina, will have due attention paid to his wise words and looks :—all the ‘neglected personages’ finding the coast clear, and the silence no longer

invaded, by that merry laughter, full of joyous pride, will take their rightful stations—usurped no longer—in our comedy.

Max had gone away with a gay jest, beseeching Nina not to lose her heart to Mr. Lyttelton, that walking law-book, before he returned from his visit to the mountains. What seemed then the merest jest, was soon no jest at all.

Mr. Lyttelton, dressed with unusual care, and radiant with something which nearly approached a smile, called at father Von Horn's scarcely half an hour after the departure of the young man and hunter John. He came, he said, to compliment Miss Nina on her admirable vivacity and grace in the part of *Lydia*, which he had the pleasure of seeing her perform, on the last evening at the "Globe." He had been very frequently, in his visits to the north, to see the piece in many theatres, personated by many beautiful women:—but he had never had the pleasure, the happiness he might say, of witnessing a performance so replete with grace and power, so full of sparkling and fascinating vivacity, as that of the lady in whose presence he now had the honor of being—then and there.

These words were not precisely those uttered by Mr. Lyttelton, that solemn admirer; but we have given a tolerably accurate transcript of his remarkable and uncommon speech on this occasion. That he had prepared himself before undertaking such an extraordinary effort—perhaps written it carefully and committed it to memory, like many orators celebrated for their impromptu bursts of eloquence—there seems little reason to doubt. True, Mr. Lyttelton was not accustomed to con over or write out his forensic addresses; but even the most fluent orator, when he desires to make a profound impression, studies beforehand his subject, selects and arranges his sentences, seeks to discover the most winning gestures and captivating tones. It was Mr. Lyttelton's object to

make a profound impression on this occasion:—and he so far succeeded, that when he took his leave Nina acknowledged to herself, with a sentiment of self condemnation, that in heretofore regarding this gentleman as a decidedly wearisome person, she had done him very great injustice. As for Mr. Lyttelton, he went away completely enslaved—and for twenty-four hours afterward was reported to have not once looked into a law-book, or opened a record. Strange power of love, even in the most stubborn hearts.

Thus was the first step taken by Nina and her admirer, hand-in-hand, toward the imaginary altar over which presides that merry god, lover of jocund wedding bell-chimes, and golden rings. Hand-in-hand: for we must confess that Nina felt that Mr. Lyttelton's attention to her were, all things considered, a most extraordinary compliment, and she was not backward in betraying her great satisfaction at his visit, and his promise to come soon again. This visit was a compliment which no other young lady could boast of: hitherto her admirer had been wholly absorbed in his legal and political pursuits, had forsworn the society of ladies, and had even—wrapped up in his dusty papers, and law-volumes—seemed wholly unconscious of the existence of such things as young girls.

He had not, however, on this account disappeared from the eyes and thoughts of the marriageable young ladies of the borough;—many had “set their caps” at the rising young lawyer and politician; and not a few would have returned no churlish answer to a declaration (not legal) on his part. He was not agreeable, certainly—did not dance—seldom smiled—was addicted to the unsocial habit of falling into reveries, in which all consciousness of place and people was lost upon his part: but he was undeniably most intelligent, was of good “estate,” by no means ill-looking, and was almost certain to be returned for Congress in a year or two. Is it wonderful, therefore, that

Mr. William Lyttelton should be regarded as an eligible person for matrimony, by the fair dames of the borough ; or that Nina should congratulate herself upon having ensnared this formidable woman-hater ?

Max knew not the sad consequences which were to arise from his suggestion to Nina, in relation to the after-piece. Had he dreamed of such a thing, we doubt whether the young man would have taken so much pains to persuade his cousin to appear in it. Her fascinating appearance on that interesting occasion—beyond the least doubt—fashioned and “shaped the ends” of her after life, more powerfully than Max had dreamed they could. She had completely charmed the sombre lawyer and politician—he was now her willing slave, soon to assume another, and very different position, in the eyes of the law, at least.

Days and weeks glided away, and Max, absorbed in his mountain sports, did not return. Nina was not sorry for his absence, since she would have experienced some awkwardness had he been present, and for a very simple reason. Mr. Lyttelton was now her avowed suitor ; that gentleman called to see her every day ; the house was full of his presents—some of them exceedingly elegant and costly : in a word, a new chapter had opened in the book of Nina’s existence ; and that new chapter might not be very much to her cousin Max’s taste. Nina was relieved by his absence—for she felt that Max had very piercing eyes. If he loved her, on which point she had never been able to make up her mind, how unpleasant would be his presence !—If he was indifferent to her marriage with Mr. Lyttelton, how dreadful his bantering tongue ! Nina was devoutly thankful for his absence.

So rolled on the days, the weeks, and at the end of a month Mr. Lyttelton had paid the young lady such delicate attentions, had made himself so agreeable, had ministered so pleasantly to her vanity, by attending her to

every festival far and near—he, the austere business man transformed, for the nonce, into a gay lady's man—that Nina's heart was won; and so, one morning when Mr. Lyttelton asked the delicate question, which is to so many men a stumbling-block, Nina without hesitation gave him her hand. Mr. Lyttelton solemnly kissed the hand, and as he would doubtless have expressed it, the “pleadings” were through, and the “issue” was made up.

Soon the interesting fact was made known by Nina, to her relations and friends; father Von Horn would not have forced his daughter to marry the marquis of Carra-bas; he was delighted to find that she had chosen so worthy a man, and gave her his blessing. Nina's friends received the intelligence with complacent smiles: they had “known it from the very first,” they said. And so the day was fixed, and Nina, to her profound astonishment, reflected, that she would soon be that very character she had declared she never *would* be—a married woman.

There was one person who received the intelligence of her intended marriage, with profound wrath and bitter jealousy of the happy man to be. This was Hans Hud-dleshingle, who, as we know, was one of Nina's most persevering admirers, and who never for a moment had doubted his ultimate success—backed by the evident partiality of her father for him as a German, and the graces of his intellect and figure. Hans was overcome with rage; then with despair; then a thousand projects chased each other through his somewhat muddy brain, all bearing on the subject of the marriage, and the means of preventing its consummation.

One morning he heard that the day for Nina's marriage was fixed; then suddenly flashed across his memory a conversation he had heard, not long ago at father Von Horn's, and a strange idea occurred to him.

He determined that this idea should be shaped into an act.

CHAPTER XXV.

AN AUTUMN EVENING WITH JEAN PAUL.

It was two or three days before the time appointed for Nina's marriage, when one evening that young lady was seated at the supper table, from which her father had just risen.

In truth there seemed some foundation for the general opinion, that Nina was one of the prettiest maidens of the whole borough of Martinsburg. It is undeniable that her dress was negligent and her hair disordered; but as she sat there at the broad board, with the rich red sunlight, streaming through the open window upon her curls, turning them into waves of molten gold—upon her white forehead, her bright eyes, her rosy cheeks—lighting up all with its warm autumn radiance—one might have been pardoned for concurring in the above-mentioned general opinion. Certainly, Nina was a beauty—and though none of the gentlemen of her acquaintance had hung themselves, or fought duels, or written poetry, or done any other dreadful thing in honor of her charms, yet that beauty had not been without effect upon the hearts of many:—a fact of which Nina was perfectly cognizant.

After scolding aunt Jenny, and nearly running crazy a small negro boy, hight Sallust, by the number of orders given him in rapid succession; and treading on the cat's tail; and pinching the ear of the old superannuated dog Bugle, who lay stretched beside the table; and bowing coquettishly through the window to an acquaintance, who

at the moment chanced to pass:—when Nina had dispatched these household duties and pleasures, she betook herself with the key-basket on her round bare arm, to the door, where her father sat smoking his immense meerschäum and quietly reflecting on the events of the day, which was about to close. From time to time, the old man's eyes would wander to the portrait over the fireplace, distinctly visible from the place where he was sitting—the portrait of old Courtlandt Von Horn his father, that hero of so much military renown, upon the border, long ago, who now lay like a valiant German Ritter taking his rest in the church-yard on the opposite hill. From time to time, too, his eye would fall on a German book lying open on his knee, in which he seemed to have been reading.

“Nina, darling,” said father Von Horn to his daughter, “come, read me a chapter in my new book. You will like it much, for it is beautiful and genial, like every thing from Fatherland.”

Nina pouted: and the reader must not think too hard of her, for doing so. She was in one of her bad humors, such as we have seen her betray on the morning when this true history commenced: and further, she had no desire to pass the beautiful evening with her eyes upon a page full of black, German characters, when the cloud-characters of orange and gold in the blue sky were so much more attractive.

“What is it, father?” she asked.

“‘*Nicholas Margraf*.’ Jean Paul’s last work: as far as I have perused it, it is well worthy of him.”

Nina took the book.

“Commence at the seventh chapter daughter,” said father Von Horn.

“It looks so dull,” said Nina, turning over the leaves listlessly.

“It is not dull, daughter.”

"Oh me! I'm mighty tired!" groaned Nina, "these servants will run me distracted!"

"Don't read, then, my child," said her father, "don't make a duty of what I meant for a pleasure."

But Nina knew that her father would be hurt if she failed to read, and as she loved her father this would afflict her. Therefore, she turned duly to Chapter VII., and commenced, reflecting that after all her attitude in the little wicker chair, with one white arm supporting her head the other across the book, was not so ungraceful should visitors approach.

It was a pleasant sight to see the old German and his daughter, thus side by side in the quiet, beautiful evening, under the broad old golden leaved oaks, fronting the setting sun. It was amusing too, to witness the difficulty with which Nina—only half comprehending the meaning—enunciated the guttural diphthongs of that strange language which Jean Paul delighted in making, more wild and rugged than it naturally was. As to the old German, he seemed much pleased, and often interrupted the reading with a subdued laugh which was the very music of hearty enjoyment.

The sun sank behind the blue mountains, and father Von Horn took the book from Nina.

"What a wonderful writer—what a striking humor!" he said, "Herr Richter is a good, as well as a great man."

"It's so strange, father."

"Yes; so it is. But it is not too strange to teach us how great and commendable, are content and love in this world."

Nina turned the leaves, carelessly glancing at an approaching visitor.

"If we are amiable and contented, daughter, and love our neighbor," said father Von Horn, "we are not only living a more holy and God-fearing life, but are happier here below."

Nina's good humor began to return; she was a somewhat fiery young lady, but not what is called moody.

"Content is an excellent thing, father," she replied; "but every body can't be contented."

"Are *you* discontented?"

"Oh, no," said the young girl, slightly blushing; "but you know, father, how aunt Jenny and Sallust try me. They almost drive me crazy!"

This was said with a laugh. Father Von Horn's echoed it.

"Pshaw! these are trifles," he said, "you have a warm, good heart, daughter—don't mind them."

"I don't, much."

"You are not an irritable person; you love, not hate, most people, I am sure;—as is right."

"I dearly love *you*, father," replied Nina, bending over, and laying her hand trustingly on the massive shoulder.

"Not a doubt of it, child," said father Von Horn, cheerily; "still you are going to leave me, you little witch."

"Oh, father," said Nina, laughing and blushing.

"At what time did he say he would be able to return?"

"William from Alexandria, sir? He said nine o'clock this evening."

"Ah, I don't think I can spare you!"

"Father!" said Nina, beginning to cry. The old man drew her to him and kissed her. She rose to go in, seeing a gentleman approach whom she did not care to see; but her father laughingly restrained her.

The gentleman was Mr. Huddleshingle.

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE LAST INTERVIEW—BUT ONE—BETWEEN NINA AND HANS HUDDLESHINGLE.

It can not be said that Nina received Mr. Huddleshingle in a very flattering manner ; the original pout came back in its full force, as she returned a distant bow to his phlegmatic salute.

“Welcome, Hans,” said father Von Horn, “what news?”

“Nothing that I have heard, sir,” said Mr. Huddleshingle. “Miss Nina, I am glad to see you looking so well and happy this fine evening.”

“Thank you, sir, I am very well.”

“You are looking better than I ever saw you.”

“I am glad to hear it, sir.”

“To be sure,” continued Mr. Huddleshingle, with a slight tremor in his voice which excited Nina’s astonishment, so phlegmatically self-possessed was her visitor on ordinary occasions, “to be sure, it is nothing more than I might look for—health and happy looks I mean—on the eve of your marriage.”

Nina bowed coldly.

“It’s a very agreeable time generally,” said her visitor.

“Agreeable, sir? I do not understand.”

“I thought I had a right to think so,” said Mr. Huddleshingle, “having seen so many couples married. Ladies

generally look in good spirits on the day before their marrying."

"Do they?" asked Nina, with intense disdain—so intense that her unlucky admirer almost ground his teeth.

"I think they generally do," he replied moodily, "and I suppose Miss Nina will be looking as bright as a—as a—flower, this time day after to-morrow. Some will not feel so pleasant as she will, I know though:—but every young lady has a right to please herself, and nobody ought to say her nay."

What it cost Mr. Huddleshingle to utter this speech, his agitated voice, and heightened color indicated.

Father Von Horn came to divert the threatened storm, by laughingly slapping the young German on the shoulder, and saying:

"That's right, Hans! always leave the choice to them. I should, if I had fifty daughters: my father, old Courtlandt Von Horn, as you call him yonder, taught me that much."

Hans almost started.

Nina glancing sideways at him, was conscious that while he ostensibly spoke with his eyes fixed on her, his gaze wandered to the portrait, and his eyes almost blazed. Misunderstanding his agitation, and attributing it to disappointment—for she knew very well Mr. Hans Huddleshingle's feelings toward herself—Nina experienced a sentiment of pity for her unhappy admirer.

"What a very beautiful evening it is, Mr. Hans," she said kindly, "look at the sunset."

"Yes—yes, beautiful," said Mr. Huddleshingle starting and blushing: this kind speech had nearly changed his purpose. But an unlucky incident just then occurred which had much effect upon after events.

This incident was the appearance of Mr. William Lytton at the end of the street, leisurely approaching in

his old worn out curricie, in which he was accustomed to travel the circuit.

Nina jumped up, clapping her hands and crying, "Oh, father—there he is—back already!" and without any apology to Mr. Huddleshingle she ran into the house to smooth her disordered dress and hair, before meeting her solemn lover.

Mr. Huddleshingle looked once at the approaching vehicle, ground his teeth audibly, and bidding father Von Horn good-evening, went away, drawing in his breath, and clenching his hands just as Mr. William Lyttelton solemnly checked his steed before the door.

His resolution was taken—fixed.

CHAPTER XXVII.

A MODEL LOVER.

MR. LYTTTELTON descended slowly from his curriele and inclosed father Von Horn's fingers in his iron grasp—by which excess of cordiality he may have intended to supply the place of a smile: no such exhibition of gladness appeared upon his rigid features. At the same moment Nina appeared at the door.

Nina—but so metamorphosed, so wholly different, so radiantly beautiful, with her fair, neatly-bound hair, her tasteful costume, her tiny feet filling miraculous baby-slippers, that she was scarcely recognizable. Her listless, ill-humored air had changed to one of the greatest liveliness and vivacity. Her eyes danced: her lips were smiling: her whole manner was so altered that had Mr. Huddleshingle been present no one can tell to what transports of jealousy and ire he would have been driven.

“And how have you been, William—and did you have a pleasant ride—and was the day warm—and did you see any acquaintances in Alexandria—and did you gain your cause in Winchester?—and—tell us all about it.”

These were some of the numerous, almost innumerable questions which Nina poured forth upon the solemn gentleman in black, who bore the infliction with much equanimity. It is true he disapproved of such a style of cross-examination on legal grounds, as calculated to embarrass the witness: but for once he relaxed in his professional strictness.

He therefore informed Nina—whose affectionate salute (that was the phrase then fashionable), he had received with much apparent indifference—that his ride had been a pleasant one; that the weather had been reasonably pleasant, he thought he might even venture to say excellent for traveling; that he had seen many friends in Alexandria; that he had tried his case in Winchester, and after a close contest got a verdict; and that he had, on the whole, nothing to complain of.

“And now you want some supper after your ride, William,” said Nina, affectionately, spite of her solemn lover’s indifferent manner, “you have not been to supper, of course.”

“No matter,” said Mr. Lyttelton.

“But it does matter. Just wait, and you shall have it in a few minutes—”

“Thank you, Nina; I must go home.”

“Stay by all means. Nina will be put to no trouble,” said father Von Horn; “besides, daughter,” he added, “Barry has not been to supper, and you must not neglect him.”

“Oh, Barry can—” began Nina, indifferently; but checking herself:

“Certainly it is no trouble, father,” she said; “in ten minutes every thing would be ready. Come now, William, remember you have been away for a week, nearly.”

“Well, Nina,” said Mr. Lyttelton, “I must go home for a while; but I’ll come back in half an hour.”

With which words he returned solemnly to his vehicle.

“Oh, by-the-by,” he said to the young girl, who was at his elbow, “here are some small matters for you; silks and things, I believe; I did not select them; I suppose though, they are all right.”

And Mr. Lyttelton handed out a dozen large bundles which had completely filled the bottom of the vehicle.

"Thank you, dear William," said Nina gratefully, and casting a timid glance at her grave admirer.

"It was no trouble," he said.

And taking the reins, he placed his foot upon the step of the carriage. A thought seemed suddenly to strike him.

"Nina," said he, turning round with a smile which somewhat relaxed his solemn physiognomy.

"William!"

"Come Nina, a kiss before I go. I love you very much, Nina!"

And after this extraordinary speech, having received the salute, Mr. William Lyttelton drove slowly away.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

BARRY.

NINA ran into the house nearly borne to the ground by the weighty bundles she carried; and soon the whole establishment was in an uproar. She herself saw to every thing;—the presents were unwrapped; the supper was ordered on a royal scale; and messages were sent by Nina to all her friends in the neighborhood to come (with their brothers, cousins, or other escort), and sup with her. The presents Nina thought magnificent;—such beautiful silks and laces, and such slippers, fitting admirably! Then the earrings, and breastpins, and bracelets—the ribbons, and handkerchiefs, and gloves! Surely such a lover would be a model of a husband—such as the world rarely saw!

The presents once laid out to the best advantage for the inspection of her female friends, and the gentlemen too, if they wished to see them—Nina applied herself to the supper, which she determined should be worthy of such a guest. The servants were soon flying about like startled lapwings;—that unfortunate Sallust, who earlier in the evening had been in horrible doubt whether his head or feet were uppermost, now gave himself up for lost, and obeyed, or endeavored to obey, with the silence of despair;—and aunt Jenny thought that if such a clatter was made about a simple supper, the wedding preparations would deprive her of the small remnant of senses which she yet possessed.

Father Von Horn, to escape all this hurry, bustle, and noise, lit his meerschaum, and took his former position at the door, where he sat in quiet meditation, smoking like a bashaw, and gazing pleasantly at the red flush of sunset on the western mountain, now almost overthrown and obliterated by the fast-coming night.

Hearing a footstep toward Queen-street, he turned his head and saw Barry. The boy looked pale and startled, and sunk in thought.

"Well, Barry, my boy," said father Von Horn, "what's the matter?"

Barry raised his head with a frightened look, evidently brought back to the real world around him by the old man's hearty greeting.

"Oh, sir—nothing," said Barry, blushing at the thought that he was telling a falsehood.

"My child," said his uncle, "you ought not to think and walk about dreaming so much; no active, energetic man dreams his time away. I know you have the poetic and imaginative temperament, which exalts reverie into an improper delight; but check it, check it, Barry—now, while you are young."

Barry sat down, returning no reply, upon the grass at the old man's feet. Father Von Horn smoothed his long dark hair with his hand.

"Courtlandt the Tall himself," he muttered; "the child is the very image of the old man, and the portrait."

"What did you say, uncle?" asked Barry, rousing from his abstraction.

"I said you were like Courtlandt the Tall—my father."

Barry smiled; his preoccupation, for a moment, seemed to have disappeared.

"Am I much, uncle?"

"Very much."

"Was he a good man?"

"As good and brave a man as ever drew breath."

"Then, uncle, I am very glad I am like him in my face," said Barry, "maybe, after a while I shall be like him in my character."

"You will, my boy, I am sure; you will be a good man, Barry—for you are a good boy."

"Uncle, you don't know how glad you make me feel by saying I will be good. I only want to be good—I don't want to be a great, rich man, for I am afraid it would harden me, you know; make me look down on poor people. Oh, uncle, I hope I will be good, and you will always love me."

"Bless your heart, my boy," said father Von Horn, cheerily, "every body loves you. Don't fear I ever will stop loving you. Well, all this talking with Nina and you, has made me forget Burt; I must see to him. No," continued father Von Horn, as Barry was about to rise and go in his place, "I must look to the old horse myself."

And he entered the house. As he went in Nina came out, clad in her most graceful manner, and radiant with happiness and expectation. At first she did not perceive Barry, from the lowness of his seat. But he rose, and Nina seeing him, called the boy to her and smoothing his hair, kissed him affectionately.

"Barry, you are very handsome," said Nina, laughing; "but you must fix yourself nice for the supper. Recollect every body in the neighborhood is coming; and now I think of it, why don't you go and bring Sally."

Barry blushed: then almost trembled with a sudden recollection.

"I can not, cousin Nina," he said in a low voice; "I must go—"

Then suddenly checking himself, he sunk into one of the chairs shuddering. Nina did not observe this strange conduct: her whole attention was given to a gay party of young persons who rapidly approached; these were the

guests who had chanced to meet each other, and who bore down in one compact body—of laughing rosy faces, and manly forms—upon Nina, and (prospectively) her supper. Ladies at that day were not ashamed to eat heartily, and were guilty of no trifling with dainty confections, when good substantial edibles were at hand:—the gentlemen too, were fond of those night-dinners called suppers; and both the ladies, and the gentlemen, had repeatedly partaken of this pleasant meal in great perfection at the old German's mansion. Thus the feast and flow of other things than reason and the soul, were agreeably looked forward to.

Mr. Lyttelton arrived just as Nina was shaking hands with her male friends, and kissing the young girls of the party—a practice to which young girls for some mysterious reason are much addicted—and all having entered the hospitable doors, they were welcomed honestly and heartily by the old man; and the merry laughter and gay talk commenced, with many admiring looks at the rich presents—Nina receiving every compliment with wonderfully elegant composure: and so in due course of time came, “the supper and the dance.”

In the midst of this uproar, of clinking glasses, merry voices, and gay laughter, Nina's face became suddenly overcast by something like a cloud. The thought of Max had occurred to her; and this thought made her melancholy even in the very whirl of the revelry.

CHAPTER XXIX.

BARRY KEEPS HIS APPOINTMENT.

FROM all this confusion, noise, and merriment, Barry had soon disappeared, with that shrinking sensitiveness which characterized his timid temperament. But on this evening something unusual seemed to agitate him, and make him afraid of his own thoughts, even. Sitting, bent down, in one of the large wicker chairs beside the door, he gazed now at the calm white stars, now at the moon, which just rising kindled the eastern trees, agitated, nervous, starting at every sound.

Within, all went merry as a marriage bell, and the contrast between those gay moving figures in the background, and in the foreground the form of the boy bent down, trembling, frightened, might have struck a painter.

Suddenly the old clock struck slowly and sonorously nine. At the first stroke Barry started, at the last he rose up shuddering.

"It is time!" he murmured.

"What is it time for?" asked the voice of Nina, behind him; the violent exercise in dancing had heightened her color unbecomingly, and she came to moderate her roses in the cool evening.

Barry drew back, shaking his head.

"What are you shaking your head so wisely for, Barry?" said Nina.

Barry trembling and pale, removed her hand from his arm.

"Where are you going?" asked Nina.

"I can not tell you, cousin Nina."

"Barry you must, or I will be angry."

"I am sorry, cousin Nina; please let go my arm," Barry said, trembling; "I must go."

Nina was struck with the profound terror expressed in the boy's voice, and released his arm.

Barry, without further parley, glided into the deep shadow of the oaks and disappeared—himself a moving shadow—in the direction of the bridge. Nina hearing herself called by the young girls, dismissed the subject of the child's strange conduct from her mind, and entered the house—just, however, as father Von Horn and his son-in-law to be, came forth—at which Miss Nina was observed to pout.

These gentlemen had abandoned the gay company within, to come and talk politics in the open air, which was pleasantly cool, not at all unpleasantly, however.

At no time was Mr. Lyttelton an agreeable companion; but his conversational powers were displayed to much greater advantage in the society of a reasonable, unimaginative, sensible man, than with merry girls, and young men addicted to gay laughter. The merriment was well in its way, no doubt, but he had seen enough on this occasion, for one evening, he reflected; and so reflecting, he took his seat in the large wicker chair, which afforded a luxurious resting-place for the head, the arms, and the feet. Let it not be supposed, however, that Mr. Lyttelton was the man to profit by these advantages. No; he was accustomed to hard, upright court benches, or chairs, and he sat perfectly erect in his comfortable and capacious seat, disdaining to rest his head, his arms, or his feet, on aught connected with it.

Then commenced a rather sleepy discussion, which confined itself to politics and law; and which the reader will readily pardon our not recording here. Mr. Lyttelton held in his hand the last number of the *Martinsburg*

Gazette, and discoursed upon its editorial matter, which he took for text, with great solemnity and emphasis. But in the midst of this harangue, when the speaker's feelings were becoming aroused, and his latent fire began to glimmer and flicker, gradually growing brighter and warmer, he was suddenly arrested by a circumstance so novel in its nature, that he very nearly uttered an exclamation.

Darting from the shadow like a flash of light, knocking the paper from Mr. Lyttelton's hand, and nearly overturning that gentleman, seat and all, Barry rushed into the house, stumbled on the door sill, and fell forward on his knees among the dancers, with frightened eyes, trembling limbs, white cheeks down which ran a cold sweat in streams, and on both hands marks of dust and blood.

The whole company crowded round him in dismay, and the music died away like a wail. Father Von Horn hastened to the child with affectionate solicitude, and raised him.

"What under heaven is this about, Barry," he asked with great astonishment, "what has frightened you?"

Barry passed his hand across his forehead, and murmured something, shuddering.

"Speak, Barry!"

The boy trembled so violently that he could not speak, scarcely stand. His face was as white as a ghost's, and with under lip between his teeth, and round, awe-struck eyes, he seemed to behold something, which no one around him could see.

Father Von Horn took him by the arm, and supported him into the next room;—Nina alone following, with a hurried excuse to the company for leaving them. The door was closed, and the old man quietly smoothing Barry's hair, gently asked the meaning of his heat, agitation and fright. Barry gradually became more calm; and Nina, with a wet cloth washed the dust and blood from

his hands; Barry then in broken sentences explained matters.

That evening, he said, at about dusk, as he was passing under the large willows by the run—already nearly steeped in darkness—he had heard a voice at his elbow in the gloom, which bade him go that night at the hour of nine, to the grave of Courtlandt Von Horn, or some misfortune would happen to the family. This appointment he was not to mention to any one, or the same evil would fall upon his uncle. While the voice was speaking to him his foot had struck against a stone, and he had stumbled and fallen. He rose and looked around—he saw no one. Though terribly frightened, he had determined to go, and did go to the church-yard. On approaching the wall he had observed a figure of large size, clothed in white, standing upon the tomb of Courtlandt Von Horn—

The old man started back.

“On the tomb of Courtlandt the Tall!” he cried, catching Barry by the arm.

“On the very slab,” said Barry, trembling.

“Barry, you are deceived,” said the old man, turning pale, “or you are telling me an untruth.”

“Never, uncle. I never told a falsehood—I saw it!”

Father Von Horn passed his hand across his forehead, to wipe away the cold sweat which had gathered in large beads there. Nina’s trembling arm was round his neck.

“My mind wanders,” said he “what more, Barry. Said it any thing?”

Barry resumed his account. The white figure of the spectre had risen taller and taller, and suddenly had glided toward him. Affrighted, he had fled pursued, as he thought; and as he fled, he heard thundered in his ears, the words, “Courtlandt the Tall forbids this marriage!—Courtlandt the Tall forbids this marriage!” He had then run faster, and had fallen and hurt his hands,

but rose again, and had not stopped—as they knew—until he reached home.

The old man's head sank, and he looked mournfully at his daughter. Nina was pale, and her eyes were slowly filling with tears. She knew too well the family tradition, and her father's immovable resolution.

He took her by the hand, and muttering, "But one course remains, daughter," entered the room where the guests were assembled.

"Friends," said father Von Horn, "you have been invited, I believe, to witness the ceremony of my daughter's marriage, two days from this time. I am sorry to say, it is put off for the present—for good and sufficient reason. Enough, that it must be deferred."

The company received this address with profound astonishment. They looked at father Von Horn's firmly resolved face, at Nina's tearful eyes, bent down head, and twitching lips, at Mr. William Lyttelton's profoundly incredulous physiognomy, framed—a striking and original portrait—by the framework of the door. Nowhere any information, any satisfactory indication of the meaning of this mystery. A boy's fright to break off a marriage! To Mr. Lyttelton, even, father Von Horn gave no satisfactory answer, requesting him to call in the morning.

And so the company dispersed with long faces and astonished looks, knowing not what to think, to believe, to imagine even. They were nonplused. Last of all, Mr. Lyttelton went away;—the gentleman who, above all others, was affected by this strange occurrence. He left father Von Horn's, not knowing whether to bring an action for a novel breach of promise, or whether he should not doubt his own, and the general sanity.

CHAPTER XXX.

NINA SETS HER WITS TO WORK.

WHEN the last guest had disappeared, father Von Horn went to his daughter, and tenderly took her by the hand. Nina covered her eyes with the other hand, and shed a flood of tears—of disappointment, mortification, and sorrow.

Father Von Horn was unmoved.

“Know you not, daughter,” he said in a low tone, “that this is a fatal augury in our family—an ancestor haunting his grave on the occasion of a wedding?”

Nina only sobbed.

“The roof tree would fall and crush us,” continued the old man, solemnly, “were we to persist! Barry has never yet told an untruth; but his woeful plight is evidence enough. Courtlandt the Tall has arisen! The marriage is broken!”

“Forever, father?” sobbed Nina.

“Forever, daughter!” the old man replied much agitated, “it can not be. I could consent to your leaving me, though I have nursed you from your mother’s death to the present hour, and seen your infant face merge itself into childhood, childhood change gradually to girlhood, womanhood lastly come to place its stamp upon your forehead. Well! though I have watched you through all these changeful and happy years, living most on this earth for you, I could give you to one you loved, I could part with my jewel to one who seemed to prize it

aright. But there is another parting which I can not consent to—that parting is the eternal parting on this earth ; your death !”

“My death, father !”

“Yes, Nina ; were this marriage to take place, how know I that my daughter would not be the victim of my weakness. Her death would be the death of two persons—the old worn body would no longer hold to earth, the poor heart—it is getting very old and weary—would wear away its prison before many days of such a grief had passed. No, daughter, it must not be. Courtlandt the Tall has arisen !” the old man solemnly said, “the marriage is broken off, and will not be written in the *Red Book* ! Enough.”

Nina, much touched by her father’s words made no reply—only sobbed. Suddenly, however, she was observed to start.

“Father,” she said, “I know Barry has seen *something* ; but could not this have been a trick played on him ?”

“A trick ?”

“An imposition, by some one ; just think, father !”

“Who could think of it ? Who would presume !” cried the old man.

“Many would, father.”

“To trifle with my family matters, and practice on my feelings !”

“Father,” cried Nina, “the more I think, the more I am convinced there is some deception in the matter. Just think.”

Father Von Horn was incredulous ; but slowly the idea seemed to gather weight and probability in his mind.

“Father,” said Nina, “before you break off forever this marriage, in which my heart is engaged, grant me one favor—but one, father.”

“What is it, daughter?”

“That you will send invitations for the wedding, for the day after to-morrow, as before—”

“Well—”

“Then you might go to the church-yard—I know it is an imposition, father;—and find—”

“I?—to the church-yard!”

“Father, I *know* it is an imposition,” cried Nina; “and I think I know who it is. If it is a deception, it will be repeated—if it is not, sir, and you see—see—what Barry saw, then I will never again mention the subject of my marriage.”

This seemed plausible to father Von Horn; he feared the responsibility to his own conscience, too, which he had incurred, by so abruptly on a child's report, breaking off the intended marriage. The old man was exceedingly superstitious—this is his excuse—far more so than Nina.

Nina was not superstitious at all;—and so forcible were her arguments on this occasion, that she won her father's consent to every thing. The invitations were to be sent out again, every preparation for the wedding was to be made for the second evening; and on the *next* evening—the wedding eve—her father was to ascertain for himself, the truth of Barry's relation.

“Donner and Blitzen!” swore father Von Horn, “if it is a trick!” When Nina heard this famous oath, she knew that she need say no more

CHAPTER XXXI.

FATHER VON HORN ENCOUNTERS COURTLANDT THE TALL.

THE afternoon slowly waned, the sunset died away, and nine o'clock approached on that fatal night when father Von Horn was to go forth to meet the shade, or not the shade, of his ancestor.

Father Von Horn, the more he reflected, the more decidedly came to agree with Nina. He was almost certain now, that some trick had been played upon him, or, which was far worse, on his name. He accordingly determined to prepare himself for an encounter with an earthly power, not, however, going unprepared for unearthly visitants. Around him pale faces and trembling hands looked on, and obeyed his bidding. First came an old rusty sabre which had hung for nearly half a century on the walls, and being about to see some service in all probability, was buckled around the old man's waist by its antique band. It had belonged to Courtlandt the Tall himself, and now it was to be used, in a possible contingency, against his derider or deriders. Then a dark lantern attached to the end of a stick was produced—the lantern to see by, and the stick to be used on the back of the person or persons who had taken such unwarrantable liberties with the Von Horn name; if indeed the liberty were not taken by one whose right was unimpeachable—old Courtlandt Von Horn himself.

Thus equipped father Von Horn called Barry and bade him keep by his side, mounted his horse, the coal black

Burt, and went forth, accompanied by the child into the dark night.

It was very dark and threatening—heavy thunder clouds having slowly gathered overhead sweeping from the western mountains. The moon, struggling through them like a storm-beaten ship, over whose lights waves incessantly break, glimmered and disappeared, and rode forth again, as the wind swept it onward to the west.

The ravine was flooded. The little tinkling rivulet was becoming a mountain torrent, each moment growing larger and larger. The freshet caused by the heavy rains in the mountains, beat full and tumultuous against the stone work of the bridge. This stone work trembled and shook, as the large waves which had bowed huge trees above, struck against it, rebounding covered with foam like furious war-steeds in the shock of battle.

Father Von Horn and Barry crossed the bridge slowly, and bent their way toward the church-yard. No sound was heard but the mutterings of thunder far away in the western mountains, and the heavy footsteps of Burt, or his uneasy snort as he snuffed up the coming storm. They approached the church-yard through the profound darkness, which was only relieved by a few flashes of lightning and the fitful glimmering of the moon; the lantern had been closed securely.

The whole neighborhood was wild and lonely: the wind sighed in the tall melancholy trees which bowed and bent toward each other like courteous giants, and across the waste moor by which they drew near the church-yard, the tall tombstones gleamed like spectres.

Suddenly father Von Horn caught Barry by the arm. ·

“I have seen something,” he said in a whisper, “I will conceal myself here behind this bush; show yourself.”

Barry obeyed trembling; and indeed he had no sooner advanced with faltering steps into the open space in full

view of the tomb than a flash of lightning revealed to father Von Horn's terrified sight a gigantic figure standing with uplifted arms upon the grave of Courtlandt the Tall! The flash of lightning, however, had another effect; it revealed the old German to the spectre. The consequence was that the white figure leaped the stone wall with remarkable agility, and—the moon just then sailing slowly forth—was seen scudding across the common toward a clump of bushes at the distance of some hundred yards.

Father Von Horn's superstitious fears disappeared like magic, and full of wrath he put spurs to Burt, and sweeping like a substantial whirlwind toward the ghost would have immediately overtaken him—but for a very simple but also very unlucky circumstance. There grazed near the clump of bushes mentioned, quietly and peacefully, a noble mare, milk white and fleet as a deer, which every body in the borough was well acquainted with; the ghost already imagined himself in the clutches of his enemy when this chance of escape presented itself.

Burt, with fiery nostrils, which emitted clouds of vapor in the chill air, heavy breathing, and energetic gallop was sweeping toward him; on Burt's back a gentleman whose name had been trifled with, whose family traditions ridiculed, and whose superstitious ideas had been made a laughing stock of by the ghost.

The ghost was naturally averse to any encounter with this personage at the moment in question; so wrapping about him his sheet, he leaped with one vigorous bound, on the back of the startled and neighing animal and clasping him round the neck, took to the open road at lightning speed.

CHAPTER XXXII.

THE DEAD GO FAST.

BEHIND the spectre father Von Horn came on wrathfully. His metal was completely aroused, and he determined that the comedy should end definitely then, if not there.

He therefore spurred Burt to his topmost speed, and thus kept up with the fugitive if he did not gain ground. They ran thus for nearly two miles, the ghost doubling and winding in the numerous cross roads, endeavoring without success to throw his pursuer off the scent. It was all in vain. Father Von Horn followed him by the noise of his steps, and the occasional moonlight, without difficulty. By one of those numerous doubles in the road the ghost—either advisedly, or from not perceiving the bearing of surrounding objects, which was very natural in one so agitated—bore down again upon Martinsburg. Behind him his pursuer rode as swiftly. Through the fitful moonlight, over hills, down rocky descents, up rugged ascents, into Queen-street, toward the bridge, they came revealed to view only by the occasional lightning flashes, breaking with the roar of thunder. Behind, father Von Horn with streaming hair, swinging lantern, and rattling sabre, bore on like a tornado.

Before, another sight was seen. There was the ghost wrapped in his sheet, clinging like a vice to his horse's mane, or rather neck, for he was lying on the animal with one arm round his neck, ever and anon casting

affrighted glances behind at his pursuer. They looked—horse and horseman—like one of those singular figures which Retzsch delighted to outline for the German ballads.

Suddenly a terrific roar was heard, louder than wind, thunder, or torrent. The bridge had given way with a crash, and horrible to relate, the ghost and father Von Horn, before they could check their horses, were precipitated into the raging current.

The spectre horseman and his steed sunk, then rose again. Looming above the waves like a rising sun, father Von Horn tried to save his horse, but poor Burt seemed to have gone down, and a gigantic surge swept over the glimmering lantern. Within two yards of the shore the ghost redoubled his exertions, and soon the mare raised her forelegs, and clinging to the bank like a dog, emerged from the water. A large wave behind them suddenly took the form of a man and horse, the old German rose from the wave, and by a desperate effort followed. Both then, pursuer and pursued, swept on, the white mare turning into the German quarter.

The race had been close, but the spectre of Courtlandt the Tall might even then have achieved his escape, at the pace he was going, and so returned quietly to lie down in his tomb, but for an unfortunate accident. Just when their speed had begun once more to mend, and when they had reached the open space before father Von Horn's door, the mare stumbled in the darkness, rolled her rider on the ground, and frightened at the quick gathering lights and faces, disappeared like a spectre steed, leaving the spectre jockey to his fate.

The whole household ran out—father Von Horn drew near, and in the midst of all the ghost rose, and throwing the sheet on the ground, looked with a mixture of phlegm and defiance on the crowd. The ghost was no other than Mr. Hans Huddleshingle.

"Sir," said father Von Horn gravely, "you have done a most unworthy thing. It is neither graceful or becoming for one so well descended as yourself, to thus trifle with the traditions of an honest family. Go, sir, you are sufficiently punished; there is no enmity between us!"

And giving Burt to a servant, father Von Horn turned his back on Mr. Huddleshingle, who returned homeward, devoured with rage, mortification, and despair.

Nina threw her arms round her father's neck, and joyfully kissed him.

"Did I not tell you so, father," she cried, "I knew that odious man was the person, yesterday; I was almost certain, at least, for he heard us talking about the Red Book and grandfather."

"You were right, my daughter," said the old man, panting with his violent ride, "now the marriage may take place, I hope, in peace."

And they all entered the house.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

MR. LYTTTELTON IS MADE TO UNDERSTAND.

THE household were seated discussing the strange incident which had just occurred, when the face of Mr. William Lyttelton was seen at the door; and that gentleman gravely stalked in, shaking the rain drops from his hat.

"You mentioned the hour of ten, I believe, sir," he said to father Von Horn, taking out his watch, "and then you promised me an explanation of this most extraordinary occurrence."

"Be seated, Mr. Lyttelton," said the old man, who had changed his dripping clothes, but was still panting, "I shall get my breath again very soon."

Mr. Lyttelton sat down, betraying as much astonishment as his face was capable of expressing. As yet he was wholly ignorant of what we have narrated for the reader in detail—namely, the family tradition of the Von Horns, the explanation of Barry's fright on the previous evening, and the catastrophe related in the last chapter. The solemn gentleman was completely at a loss; he was wandering about in the mazes of conjecture, like a blind man in the night time, like a huge learned-looking owl in the day time. He understood nothing; and now called by appointment to hear the statement of the case, from his intended father-in-law.

"You were, no doubt, very much astonished yesterday," father Von Horn said after a pause of some minutes, "at

the abrupt manner in which I dismissed my guests. Well sir, you had, I confess, some right to be surprised. Listen, and you shall judge for yourself."

The old German then related to Mr. Lyttelton the whole affair from beginning to end, making no mystery of his family superstition, but offering for it no apology. Mr. Lyttelton stretched his eyes to their greatest possible width; solemnly rubbed one side of his nose with his long finger; shook his head with an oracularity which expressed folio volumes; and in one word, exhibited all those signs of astonishment which men are accustomed to exhibit, on hearing a strange and unaccountable circumstance narrated. Father Von Horn with a mixture of amusement and indignation, concluded by detailing the final catastrophe and signal overthrow, in a double sense, of Mr. Huddleshingle.

"And now," said he, "you have the whole matter, and may comprehend these singular events completely."

"I understand," said Mr. Lyttelton gravely, "This gentleman—Mr. Huddleshingle I think you call him—well deserves a severe punishment at my hands."

"No, no," said father Von Horn, regaining his cheerful good-humor, "his father and myself were friends. I must not disgrace him more than he has disgraced himself."

"Hum!" muttered Mr. Lyttelton, "but I was not his father's friend, sir."

"You?" said the old man, laughing.

"No; and I hold it to be my right and my duty to take notice of this insult to—"

"To whom, friend William?"

"To Nina."

"Why, you are too fast!" said father Von Horn, merrily, "Nina is not your wife yet. Until then—"

Mr. Lyttelton smiled.

"She soon will be, I hope, sir. To-morrow evening, I believe, is fixed upon for the wedding."

"See, Nina," said father Von Horn, shaking with laughter, "if you allow him to take things into his own hands so completely now before your marriage, what will you do when he is your lord and master?"

Nina blushed, and glanced at the solemn face of her lover. That gentleman considered himself, possibly, very well repaid for the banter which had given him that loving glance.

"Well, sir," he said gravely to the old man, "I suppose now the wedding may take place without further difficulty. I am ready, and so is Nina, I believe; I am naturally anxious," added Mr. Lyttelton, with as much diffidence as his profession had left him master of, "to have the ceremony over; if Nina, therefore, throws no obstacle in the way—"

"Oh!" said Nina, much embarrassed.

"To-morrow evening will be our wedding-day."

"Or wedding-evening: I don't think you will be further troubled by insolent triflers, like Mr. Huddleshingle," said father Von Horn. "The wedding will take place; and friend William, I wish you all happiness. We all do. We are all here now, and all are pleased that Nina has chosen so worthy a gentleman as yourself for her husband; all of us—with the exception of my wild nephew, Max, who appeared some time since you recollect, in the character of *Romeo*, on the evening of Mrs. ——'s examination. He is off in the mountains with hunter John, and no doubt will be much surprised when he receives the message I sent him. I am afraid he has wandered deeper into the mountains, though—to Mr. Emberton's, or other of his friends; and will not return until the marriage is over. Max is a wild dog, but we all love him; I hope he will be in time."

At that moment the hoof-strokes of a horse were heard

upon the hard ground without—the sound suddenly ceased—and a footstep was distinguished upon the gravelled walk leading to the door. The door opened, and the figure of Max appeared upon the threshold, his clothes soiled with dust, his face agitated, one hand pressed upon his heart as if to still its tumultuous beating.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

MAX APPEARS AGAIN UPON THE SCENE.

MAX closed the door and came in, bowing with gloomy embarrassment to the company.

"Welcome, my boy," said father Von Horn, kindly offering his hand to the young man, "why did you force us to send you word of Nina's wedding? You ought, besides, to have been back long since to your law. Ah! the mountain winds are a bad thing for students—unless students are sick from too much study, which I take it is not the case with Mr. Romeo. Why, what's the matter, Max?" continued father Von Horn, "your hand is cold and trembles. Are you sick?"

"No, sir—nothing—" stammered Max, sitting down moodily, "I rode very fast."

"Why so?"

"I wished to arrive in time," said Max, bitterly; "I thought cousin Nina might be married, as she has been courted and won, while I was absent."

Nina saw the storm she had feared, rapidly approaching;—not only in the unusual address of the young man—he had called her formally *cousin* Nina—but in his moody and agitated looks and tones, so different from that merry and joyous manner habitual with him. There was a bitterness in his voice, too, which jarred upon her heart. The old man also noticed this change in Max's usual bearing, and said:

"Married while you were absent say you, nephew?"

Well pray whose fault would that have been, had you indeed not returned? Nina could not tell Mr. Lyttelton that you were off on a hunting expedition, and appoint the day after your return for her wedding-day. Come, come! you are weary and out of humor; get Max some supper, Nina."

"I am not hungry, sir," said Max, his eyes filling with tears of sorrow and mortification, "and I could not eat."

"Riding usually gives me an appetite," said Mr. Lyttelton, phlegmatically.

"It has not me," said Max coldly.

Mr. Lyttelton saw an opening for a joke; he caught at it with the energy of an advocate who sees a weak point in his opponent's case.

"Perhaps you are in love," said he smiling; "that I believe is fatal to the appetite."

Max's eye suddenly blazed; and he met Mr. Lyttelton's glance with one of such defiance that that gentleman was profoundly astonished.

"In love, sir?" said the young man sternly. "What do you mean?"

Father von Horn rose and laid his hand on the young man's shoulder.

"Max," he said, "you must really be unwell, or something has put you out of humor. You speak to Mr. Lyttelton as if he were your personal enemy!"

Max uttered not a syllable in denial of his uncle's hypothesis.

"I am not aware that I have said any thing impolite, sir," said Mr. Lyttelton.

"Oh father!" said Nina, coming forward with tears in her eyes; "don't speak harshly to Max; I know he is unwell and irritable—you know like me so often."

"Why daughter," said the old man, "I had no intention of speaking harshly to Max. He is not a child for me to rate for ill-behavior. Come, my boy, throw off your

ferocious frowns—which I am at my wits' ends about—and sit down. You must have some supper, it is nearly eleven o'clock; and you must be hungry."

"Nearly eleven?" interrupted Mr. Lyttelton looking at his watch; "so it is, sir. Well I must go, as I have a record to study to-night. Good-night, sir," he added shaking by the hand father Von Horn, who endeavored to prevail on him to stay longer, alleging with great politeness the earliness of the hour, "and good-night, Nina. Be ready to-morrow."

Having said good-by, Mr. Lyttelton might have very properly retired, but he waited as usual for the sound of Nina's voice, beseeching him to stay; perhaps for the conjugal kiss which she usually bestowed upon his oracular lips. If Mr. Lyttelton lingered for such a purpose he lingered in vain. Nina neither asked him to remain, nor seemed at all disposed to grant him a "salute," or made any movement forward even to press his hand before his departure. And if the reader fails to comprehend the rationale of this phenomenon we are quite sure we could not, in a whole volume, convey to him any accurate idea upon the subject. Mr. Lyttelton, therefore, departed with scarcely any recognition of the fact on the part of Nina; he knew not what to think, but decided upon the propriety of jealousy, in which the handsome face of Max entered and played a distinguished part.

Father Von Horn came back holding the candle with which he had lit his guest out, and unmistakably yawned; then declared he felt exceedingly sleepy—and then, having told Nina and Max good-night, without a trace of ill-humor toward the young man in his manner, retired to bed. Nina got up to follow him. Max with his head turned away took no notice of the movement.

Nina went up to him, and took his hand.

"Max," she said in a low tone, "are you angry with me?"

"No," said the young man turning away.

"Why are you so cold to me, then?" said Nina.

Max raised his head, and a profound sigh, which seemed to relieve his heart, broke from him.

"Am I cold to you?" he said, "I did not mean to be cold to you; indeed it would be very ridiculous in me to be giving myself airs as if I was some important person. I hope you will forgive me, if I have annoyed you."

Nina was much moved at the profoundly sad tones in which these words were uttered.

"No, you have not annoyed me, Max; but you called me when you came in *cousin* Nina, and I thought you were angry with me."

"I am not angry with you," Max said, in a low voice.

"But, Max! something *is* the matter with you! Max you distress me; I am ready to cry and I will cry in a minute if you don't tell me what *you* are so distressed about. Is it—can it be—Max, can it be!—" stammered the young girl blushing.

"Yes!" said Max, rising.

For a moment their agitated glances met; Max leaning, pale and statue-like, against the tall mantle-piece, Nina standing upright without the power of moving. For a moment they stood thus silent, and motionless; then Nina sank into a chair, and covered her face which was full of tears and blushes.

"Nina," said the young man, a passionate sob tearing its way from his breast, "I loved you! I love you now more than ever. I left you without dreaming of this—and when I received the intelligence I raved awhile as unfortunate people always have done, and always will do. I thought your heart—that wealth more vast than earth could give me—was at least half my own. I was mistaken, and for a time my breast was a storm, which tore it and blackened for the moment every thing around me. Well, well! the storm has sub-

sided—will subside in time, I hope, wholly ; I will try to curb this foolish agitation which is only food for laughter—”

“ Oh, Max—Max !—” sobbed Nina.

“ You are right, Nina. This is very foolish in me I know,” he said, “ and I will trouble you no more. This thing came on me like a thunder-clap, and I was surprised, that is all. Don’t let my gloominess disturb you ; and now I will not stand here groaning and sighing. Good-night !”

And leaving Nina in tears, Max went up to his room. Once more alone his feelings, softened no longer by the pleading face of Nina, were lashed again into tumultuous waves. He recalled those ironical words of Mr. Lyttelton—such he supposed them to be—“ perhaps you are in love ;” he treasured up that gentleman’s cool smile, and at the end of half an hour had made up his mind that he had insulted him. What to do ? That was the question.

This question tormented him through all the long hours of that weary night. Striding up and down the room, agitated by a thousand thoughts, Max could, after hours of thought, determine upon nothing.

The dawn found him still pacing up and down. He took his hat and descended, meeting in the dining-room with aunt Jenny. Aunt Jenny immediately unfolded the events of the last two days ; the spectre—the night ride—the catastrophe.

Max caught at this with sombre pleasure ; and smiling scornfully left the house ; on what errand we shall discover.

CHAPTER XXXV.

M. PANTOUFLE'S LAST LESSON AND WHAT CAME OF IT.

AT eleven in the forenoon of the eventful day, on the morning of which we have seen Max leave his uncle's, and on the evening of which Nina was to give her hand away to Mr. Lyttelton, M. Pantoufle Xaupi, or as we have elected to call him—therein sustained by general usage—M. Pantoufle simply, called to give the young girl her last lesson in music.

M. Pantoufle made much capital, so to speak, out of this event. He was profuse in his bows and congratulations—paid his pupil many sly compliments on her good looks—and made more than one courteously-worded, paraphrased allusion to the happy event.

It might with truth be said that M. Pantoufle, on this occasion, not for one instant kept an upright position in the young girl's presence. He had brought with him a magazine of bows, smiles, shrugs, grimaces, from which he drew those graceful weapons in profusion, and shot them at his lovely pupil with prodigal politeness. His hand never once released the richly-laced cocked hat; the richly-laced cocked hat but rarely left the owner's heart; the owner of the heart had apparently but one desire on earth—to bow to the lady's very feet.

Nina took her seat at the harpsichord, and struck the keys.

"What divine touch!" cried M. Pantoufle in an ecstasy.

"Come, M. Pantoufle," said Nina, "you are in a complimentary vein this morning. I am not in a laughing humor. My lesson please."

"The last—ah, ma'mselle, the last."

"What do you mean?"

"'Tis the last lesson."

"Well!"

"Before the happy event."

"My marriage, you mean?"

"Yes, ma'mselle."

"Well—come now."

"I could teach ma'mselle no more."

"Teach me no more? pshaw!"

"'Tis true, ma'mselle."

"Why I play very badly."

"Badly! *mon Dieu!*"

"You know it."

"You play divinely, ma'mselle!"

"Pshaw! come let us begin."

"With pleasure."

"Which piece?"

"This, ma'mselle."

And Monsieur Pantoufle took from his port-folio a piece of music.

"'Tis new," he said.

"And pretty?"

"Oh, charming!"

"Strike it."

Monsieur Pantoufle, with polite ease, sat down and ran his fingers over the instrument.

"Why, it is not pretty," said Nina.

"That is the prelude—*seulement.*"

"Well, go on."

Monsieur Pantoufle commenced the piece with a brilliant flourish, and then ran through it, the music rattling like miniature thunder, and glittering, so to speak, like

lightning. Nina did not interrupt him. He finished and turned round. Nina's eyes were full of tears.

"'Tis pretty, is it not?" said Monsieur Pantoufle, not observing her emotion.

"Very," said Nina, turning away, "I have heard Max humming it a great deal within the last month:—no, before that;" Nina added, mournfully.

"I teach him," said Monsieur Pantoufle, with a polite grimace.

"Have you seen him to-day?"

Monsieur Pantoufle looked mysterious.

"Yes, ma'mselle," he said.

"Did he look well?"

"Well?"

"I mean in good spirits—*bien aise*—he was sick last night."

"Sick, eh?" said Monsieur Pantoufle, evading the question.

"*Malade*: was he well, I say, to-day?"

"Why, ma'mselle, I must confess, he look badly."

"What was he doing?"

"Writing," said Monsieur Pantoufle, innocently.

"What, pray?"

"Ah, you must ask him, ma'mselle," replied Monsieur Pantoufle, laying his hand carefully upon the inside of his cocked hat, and bowing politely.

"Well, sir—now we will go on, if you please," said Nina, listlessly; and she again took her seat at the harpsichord. Monsieur Pantoufle betook himself to his duty, with elegant ease.

The lesson lasted half an hour, at the end of which time the music-master rose to take his departure. This was not, however, as easy a matter as many persons may suppose. First he gathered up his music, and placed it carefully in his port-folio; then he carefully tied the strings of the port-folio, and placed it under his left arm.

There was still, however, the arduous task of getting out of the room, and from the young girl's presence, without turning his back. Then was made apparent Monsieur Pantoufle's elegance and grace; his masterly attainments in ball-room science. He ambled, he sidled, he trod mincingly on his toes, he bowed, grimaced, shrugged his shoulders, and retreated gradually, accompanying every step backward with a compliment. At his third polite speech, he had reached the old clock, at his fifth the bible stand, at his seventh the threshold of the door. There with his cocked hat pressed devotedly on his heart, his head inclined over the right shoulder, his feet artistically fixed together, he made Nina a most profound bow, and so took his leave, smiling—serenely happy.

He had not observed the fact that a note elegantly folded had fallen from his hat upon the floor.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

THE LAST OF MAX COURTLANDT IN MARTINSBURG.

It was not until half an hour after Monsieur Pantoufle's departure, that Nina chanced to see the note lying on the floor. Thinking it was one of the invitations which she had dropped, she picked it up and opened it. Running her eye hastily over it—or rather over both, for there were two notes folded for the sake of convenience together, she started and turned pale.

"Oh, me!" cried Nina, in an agonized tone, "how *could* Max—"

"Why, daughter," said the voice of father Von Horn, behind her, "what pray, has moved you so? I should imagine that this note you are reading, was your sentence of death. I heard you say 'Max:' what has he to do with it?—a real mystery!"

Nina placed the notes in her father's hands, with an expression of anxious terror. Father Von Horn ran his eye over them.

"Where did these come from?" he said, indignantly, "I see Mr. Pantoufle's name here!"

"He must have dropped them."

"Dropped them?"

"He has just gone, father; he came to give me my music lesson."

Father Von Horn again read the notes with a frowning brow.

"I'll see to this!" he cried, "where is Max—my nephew—ho, there!"

"Here I am, sir," said the young man, gravely entering; his hair disordered like his dress; his face pale and sombre.

"Do you know this writing?" said father Von Horn, angrily striking the paper with his finger, and holding it up before his nephew's eyes.

The young man looked at it, and betrayed some emotion.

"I ask you if you know it?"

"Yes, sir," Max replied, gloomily, "I know it, for I wrote it myself; though I do not know how you could have procured it."

"Mr. Pantoufle, sir—"

"Mr. Pantoufle has degraded himself," said the young man, scornfully. "If he *has* brought it to you, sir, I can not understand how you consented to open it."

"He did not bring it—he dropped it. But I should, in any event have read it without hesitation."

The young man remained silent and gloomy, standing motionless.

"Yes, without hesitation," repeated father Von Horn, working himself into a passion, "I hold it to be my right, as well as my duty, to prevent so unchristian and bloody an encounter. This, sir, is a challenge—"

"Yes, sir—two challenges."

"And to whom, in heaven's name, but the intended husband of my daughter."

Nina fell sobbing into a chair.

"Yes, sir," said Max, with gloomy composure, "to Mr. William Lyttelton, and to the worthy gentleman who yesterday played a disgraceful trick upon your family. Uncle!" cried the young man, losing his calmness, and speaking in a voice of great bitterness, "this thing went too far! Last night, this Mr. Lyttelton scoffed at

my agitation upon meeting Nina; laughed at me, uttered cruel and unmannerly jests at my expense! I could have forgiven that, though my blood is none of the coolest, when a man deliberately does me wrong. I went to my chamber—I recalled every word, every look, every insulting accent, and in spite of all, I determined to do nothing, to pass by all these insults, because Nina, Nina—loved this man!" Max said, through his teeth. "In the morning, I heard of the infamous trick Mr. Huddleshingle had been guilty of. He, at least, was a proper object for me to spend my anger upon, and I went straight to write him a defiance. On the way, I met Mr. Lyttelton, who bowed superciliously, and a second time insulted me! I added his name to Mr. Huddleshingle's;—he was in worthy company."

The young man stopped, mastered by his agitation—and overwhelmed with rage, jealousy, and despair.

"Sir," said father Von Horn, "you have been guilty of an unchristian and criminal act!"

"Yes, sir, and ridiculous! I know that—all. Mr Lyttelton, I suppose, will refuse to fight with his wife's cousin! A mere boy, too! Yes, sir, I know I am ridiculous; but I have been wronged, and I will right my wrong!"

"You are mad! I forbid your keeping this appointment. I will go at once to this miserable dancing-master, who is your second forsooth in this unholy matter! Nephew, I forbid your stirring one step further: I forbid your leaving the house until I return. You have been guilty of a criminal and most unchristian act!" repeated the old man, laboring under great excitement. "There is Nina, almost in a fainting fit on the day of her marriage! Here am I, an old gray-headed man, with a heart lacerated by your conduct! I forbid your leaving this house, sir, till my return—and were you twice as old as you are, I would still forbid you. To your room, sir!"

And father Von Horn angrily putting on his hat hurried off to Monsieur Pantoufle's.

Max stood overcome with a thousand emotions; anger, jealousy, mortified pride, and bitter sorrow by turns raged in his heart. His eye fell upon Nina, whose bosom was shaken with a storm of sobs.

"Great God!" cried the young man, "is it possible that this hell should have come into the place I was so happy in before. Can you be so changed, Nina! Answer me not; I am going; but not to meet your—husband. No! that is all over. But I go; were I to stay the roof tree would fall and crush me!"

And Max hurried to his chamber. Closing the door, he sat down in great agitation; and for a moment strove to collect his bitter and wandering thoughts. Then seizing a pen he commenced writing.

As he wrote his agitation changed slowly into a sombre melancholy. Then a few tears gathered in his eyes and ran down upon the paper. In a quarter of an hour he rose, leaving the sheet open upon the table.

He looked for some minutes around him, at the old familiar objects; a profound sigh or rather a groan, burst from his heart: and he went out slowly. Descending to the stable he saddled his horse—the gift of his aunt—mounted, and just as dusk began to fall upon the quiet town went forth toward the south.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

NINA'S WEDDING AND MAX'S LETTER.

FATHER Von Horn found Monsieur Pantoufle "not at home"—which circumstance was perhaps attributable to the fact that that gentleman had seen him approaching and, quietly instructing his servant what to say to his visitor, had ensconced himself in his chamber.

Immediately upon his return father Von Horn asked for Max and was informed that he had gone to his chamber. After a moment's reflection the old man determined to leave him undisturbed for a time, hoping that after an hour or two his agitation and excitement would cool down, and that this most unpleasant affair would be ended by a frank explanation between himself and the young man. Besides the wedding guests before very long began to assemble, and his attention was attracted for the moment to this more urgent matter.

The wedding was as gay as weddings usually are—music, dancing, and feasting were the order of the evening, and Nina never had looked prettier her friends informed her, albeit there lingered in her pensive eyes some evidence of the agitating scenes through which she had so lately passed. But Nina's mind was now comparatively relieved; her father had assured her that the whole matter had blown over like a wind without injuring any one; and lastly, the young girl saw there before her the gentleman whose valuable life had been so lately threatened, solemn and grave as usual it was true, but undeni-

ably enjoying excellent health and spirits. So when the young girl stood up to be married, blushing and timid as young girls will be on such interesting occasions, she looked radiantly beautiful and joyful.

They were married; and then commenced anew the feasting and revelry which were made such hearty affairs of by our valiant and great forefathers—valiant as trenchermen as in other ways; and those fair ladies we look back upon with so much admiration and affection. The stately minuet bowed itself through its complicated part, the gay reel whirled merry couples through its joyous mazes; the merriment and uproar was complete.

Then it was that father Von Horn, having heard nothing of Max, determined to go and seek him.

He found the room empty; nowhere any trace of the young man. His eye fell on the letter Max had written; and foreboding something, with that instinct of the heart whose wonderful power so often displays itself, the old man took it, and read it hurriedly, with many heavy sighs and mournful shakings of the head.

The letter was written very hastily, with evident agitation on the writer's part, and many portions were blotted with his tears.

It ran as follows :

“I must leave you, uncle; I ask your pardon for this act, because you have always been most kind to me, much kinder and more affectionate than I deserved, I know. Just now I was angry, my blood was hot and I uttered words which I should not have uttered. Pardon this, too—for my brain is still heated, and my hand trembles with agitation. I am going away, because I feel that I can not remain; not on account of your harsh words which irritated me at the moment; I no longer feel any irritation. It is not on account of those words, but because I should be miserable, a mere walking automaton,

if I were to remain longer in the place where my heart has been so cruelly torn—not by any one's fault—no!—by my destiny.

“I can write down here, what I should utter with difficulty—I loved Nina more than as a mere cousin, too much to hear of her marriage with equanimity. My heart is even now, painfully affected by the despair I felt, on receiving the intelligence of her engagement—though I have done all in my power to curb this feeling. I did not know how much I loved her until I lost her; so be it! But I can not prevent this tear from falling on the paper. I can not calm my feelings. Oh, I loved her so much, sir! She was my playmate, my friend, my cousin, and I thought that she would be my wife. This is, I know, ridiculous; you will think it more so still, when you reflect how mere a child I have always seemed, even to the present hour—so light, so boyish;—but I loved Nina as no man else could, and love her still. May every blessing be hers and yours, sir!

“I do not know where I am going—any where. I only know I can not stay here. My heart feels dead or burns; my brain is by turns apathetic and feverish; it would continue; I should be a shadow—mournful and sombre—stalking in your way. Different scenes may change me, and restore that thoughtless gayety which I had once. Now, I must go.

“You have been a father to me, uncle; God bless you! Pardon me for leaving you thus; I must; my brain is unsettled, but steady enough to show me that this departure is necessary. Again, for all your kindness to me may God bless you. I loved you dearly, sir—and will always. It racks my heart to write these lines; my hand trembles, my eyes flush with fever and passionate tears. All is dark before me; I am in a dream; my thoughts wander.

“Heaven bless you—and Nina, sir. My going will

not hurt Barry, sir:—Barry is so dear to me, you know; take care of him, uncle! Tell Nina good-by, for me; I hope she will be happy, and not be too angry with me. God bless her and all, and do not think too hard of me. Take care of Barry, uncle. Farewell.

“MAXIMILIAN COURTLANDT.”

“Alas!” murmured the old man, raising his head, sorrowfully, with a deep sigh. That sigh was answered by another behind him; Nina had stolen from the company, on the same errand which had drawn her father away.

“He is gone, Nina,” said the old man, “and here is his letter.”

Nina read it, sobbing.

“There is no help for it, daughter,” said father Von Horn; “but may Heaven guide the boy.”

The merry music floated to them; below all was joyous uproar; above, in the solitary chamber, all anxiety and gloom. Then were heard merry voices calling Nina, and drying her eyes, she went down. The old man’s head sank, and again he murmured sadly that mournful word, “alas!”

PART II.

IN THE VALLEY OF MEADOW BRANCH.

CHAPTER I.

A NEW AND AN OLD ACQUAINTANCE.

It was just at sunset of a fine September day in the year of grace 181—, nearly five years after the events we have narrated, that a traveler coming from the east, that is to say from the direction of Martinsburg, stopped upon the "Third Hill Mountain" some miles to the west of that town, to rest his horse for a moment before descending into the little valley beneath. "Sleepy Creek Mountain" stretched just in front of him across the narrow glen, and the round red orb, about to disappear, had kindled the tall pines upon its summit into a blaze, and like a bonfire threw the long shadows of tree and rock and knoll, down the declivity into "Meadow Branch Valley."

The traveler was much struck by the fair picture, so quiet and so lovely; but after gazing upon it for a few moments, he touched his magnificent sorrel with the spur and went on again, down the mountain, breasting the full red rays which lit up radiantly his rich dress, and brown closely trimmed hair and beard, and his fine smiling face. His object was apparently to reach some friendly shelter before the cool September breeze made the open air uncomfortable. Besides he seemed to have ridden far and naturally looked about him now for a night's resting-place.

He had nearly reached the base of the mountain, and,

seeing no habitation near, had begun to look with forlorn interest on a large Dutch barn and dwelling-house far to the south, when coming out from a clump of pines which, just in his front obscured the view, he found himself close to a mountain-dwelling.

"Ah," murmured the stranger, "where were my thoughts wandering? Might I not have expected to find precisely at this spot what I now see!"

And with a well-satisfied smile he approached the house, at the door of which was seated a tall powerful mountaineer.

The mountaineer was apparently above sixty, with hair nearly white with age; not wholly, for many dark threads still remained relieving the silver sheen of the rest. He was very plainly the owner and lord of the mansion, and at the moment when the stranger drew near, was caressing with his vigorous hand a tall deer-hound, who submitted with evident pleasure to this agreeable ceremony.

The traveler courteously saluted him, dismounting as he spoke; then in a voice, open and frank, but slightly French in accent, he said—

"May I crave a night's lodging, sir? I see no houses of entertainment any where, and find myself somewhat at a loss for a night's rest."

"You are very welcome, sir," said the mountaineer, rising, "make my house your own; such as it is."

"I thank you, sir," replied the stranger, "but will not my horse embarrass you?"

"We'll see to him—we'll see to him. A fine animal he is too. He shall stand by my own, and feed as well."

"Thanks, sir—many thanks for your hospitality," the traveler said with a smile.

"There's no thanks owing to me, sir. I'm a poor man, but would think myself not doing my duty to turn away a guest. Wife," added the mountaineer, turning toward the house from which came the busy hum of

a spinning-wheel, "here is a friend who will stop with us. My wife, sir—Mrs. Myers. My own name is John Myers—at your service."

The old dame came to the door and courtesied, smiling cheerfully: then betook herself to preparing the supper.

"My own name," the traveler said, "is Doctor Thomas; and while supper is getting ready, my good sir, I will with your leave see to my horse. We are old friends; I must not slight him."

"I like you the better for that, guest," the mountaineer replied in his hearty voice, "and I'll go with you, and let you see that all's right."

Thereupon the mountaineer led the way to a rude, but well constructed shed, some few paces behind the house; and opened the door. It was already occupied by a large black horse, who might have borne Goliath upon his broad back; but at his side was a vacant stall, and here the traveler saw his steed, comfortably housed, with a plentiful feed. They then returned toward the house. This was a building of some size, of logs hewn smooth with the ax, the spaces between carefully plastered to exclude rain and wind. The roof was of clapboards, held down by long poles fixed across them, and the chimneys—one at each end—were of large brown stone. In front was an antique "hominy sweep," with its heavy pestle, and at a little distance, a scaffolding, where, to judge by the pile of wood-dust, the "whip-saw" of former days, was still made to do duty.

There was about this house, little that did not remind you of that picturesque past, of our Virginia border, which has scarcely left any trace of its habitudes and peculiarities in our own day. Every thing spoke of former days—the hominy sweep, the whip-saw, the clap-boards of the roof;—and all this the traveler seemed to gaze on, with a loving eye, for its very antique rudeness.

They entered.

CHAPTER II.

THE HUNTER'S DWELLING.

INSIDE, all was quite as old-fashioned as without. The fireplace was broad and large; and in addition to the long rifle, there hung above it, fishing-rods, almanacs, and bundles of pepper pods: and in the middle an old Dutch clock ticked cheerfully. The chairs were of wicker-work, and the table of heavy oak. In one corner a flight of stairs wound up to the small rooms above; beyond this flight of stairs, a half opened door permitted a glimpse of an apartment, which, from its great neatness and simplicity, was inhabited by a child apparently, most probably by a young girl, since taste was every where very evident in its decorations;—a taste of that refined and elegant description which it is never the good fortune of the ruder sex to possess. The very arrangement of the simple furniture, the light in which the few cheaply-framed pictures were hung, the small hanging shelves of books, all neatly in their places, the chair, with its pretty calico covering, the little table, the lingering flowers so gracefully trained around the window—all gave the traveler good reason to believe that the occupant of the small chamber was a female. The large apartment in which he found himself, had a wholly different character; and just as plainly—with its large chair, and guns, and hunting-horns—was the mountaineer's; though, certainly, not his sleeping-room, which adjoined it.

The traveler seemed to be satisfied, with the single

glance he had cast upon these objects. His eye, trained to observe quickly and thoroughly, after completing its survey of the apartment, no longer fixed itself upon these material surroundings..

"Sit down, Doctor," said the mountaineer, "we are all very plain people in this neighborhood, but you are welcome to all we have. From foreign parts, I judge?"

"Why do you judge so, host?"

"From your way of talking," said the hunter, laughing silently, "and—"

"Why do you stop?" the traveler said, smiling too; "from what else?"

"From your dress, guest."

"Ah!" said thoughtfully the stranger, "there it is. Why dress—what is dress, that people should judge so much from it of the individual's character. 'Tis the fault of the age—externals, externals."

Then seeing that his host had not followed him in his musings.

"You are right so far, sir," he said, "I am from foreign countries; but I trust that my heart is what it always was—silk stockings and velvet have not changed me, God be thanked!"

There was so much frankness in the stranger's voice, and his face, ornamented by its light colored beard and mustache, assumed—spite of those martial appendages—an expression so mild and gentle, that the mountaineer, yielding to the fascination of his manner, stretched out his arm, and cordially shook his guest by the hand.

"We'll be good friends, I see, guest," he replied, "and now, I know you will be satisfied with our rough fare. Come, supper is on the table."

The supper was spread upon the broad table, and the cheerful and smiling old dame, did the honors at its head, pouring out for the traveler goblets of foaming milk, and huge cups of coffee—a great luxury at the time—and

forcing him to test in turn the flavor of half a dozen different sorts of bread. The traveler thought he had never tasted richer butter, or finer venison.

They allowed him to finish his supper before again speaking; and then his host led the way to the grassplat, which ornamented the knoll in front of the house. There setting seats, he invited his guest to smoke with him; which Doctor Thomas very readily assented to; but pleading the force of habit, took from his pocket a cigar. The mountaineer admitted the validity of this excuse, lighting his old pipe made of a corn-cob, with a stem of reed; and so they sat in pleasant converse;—the hunter, with a calm, quiet smile on his old rugged face, stroking from time to time his favorite stag-hound lying at his feet—the stranger with a thoughtful, musing manner, which terminated many times in revery; but not a mournful revery it was plain—rather well-pleased and hopeful.

His eyes were fixed admiringly on the broad belts of pines, now in deep shadow, and the rosy flush slowly dying away on the top of the mountain, when his host said quietly, but much more gently than he had yet spoken.

“There is my daughter.”

At the same moment, a young girl came singing up the knoll from the banks of the brook.

CHAPTER III.

INTRODUCES ANOTHER OF OUR HEROINES.

AT sight of the young girl, one of the half dozen tall stag-hounds rose from the grass, where he had been lying with outstretched forelegs, and thoughtful eyes, and hastened—if the word may be applied to movement so dignified as his—toward her.

Sally Myers was not quite seventeen, but she was the acknowledged beauty of the valley. Her pretty, round face, was lit up with a merry smile, and her arms, entirely bare almost from the shoulder, were models of beauty. The stranger was much struck with her—he who had seen so much female excellence—and he felt well satisfied that the character which belonged to this smiling face, could not be other than excellent. He did Miss Sally Myers no more than justice. It was not her face alone that overcame the hearts of all the young men of the neighborhood; for that matter, she was not so beautiful as some; but when her warm constant heart, and never-ceasing cheerfulness and vivacity, were thrown into the balance, the merits of any other young lady of the country side, were as nothing. So thought the mountain youths, at least.

Sally came up in company with the deer hound and courtesied to the stranger. He had risen on her approach, and now made a low and courtly inclination laying his hand in foreign fashion on his heart. Sally laughed at

this, and plainly could not help it; the traveler too seemed to feel that his ceremonious bow was a little out of place. So, resolving like a sensible man to retrieve his error, he approached the girl smilingly and shook her cordially by the hand.

"You were laughing at me, I perceive," said he, "and you were right."

"I couldn't help it," the young girl replied, coloring, "excuse me, sir!"

The traveler laughed.

"Ah!" he said, "I have been far, and seen strange people, and I have come back not much improved, I am afraid. But may I ask what song you were singing?"

"'Flowers of the Forest,' sir."

The stranger threw a piercing glance upon the girl, and then stroking the large hound, who had by this time become acquainted, and submitted very quietly to his caresses:

"Do you like that song?" he said.

"Yes, sir—very much."

"For whom do you sing it?"

The girl blushed and laughed.

"For any one," she said.

"Please sing it for me, then," he replied with a smile, and offering her his seat.

But Sally had become very nervous under the stranger's fixed, and penetrating look, and she felt wholly unable to command her voice. She therefore murmured an inaudible excuse, and ran rather than walked by the stranger, into the house, and to her chamber.

The stranger took his seat again with a smile, muttering, "Oh yes! he must have seen her, and if he has seen her—"

He was interrupted by the mountaineer, who had followed his daughter with his eyes, and now turned to him happy and proud.

"There's the little witch," he said, "you ought to have heard her sing, sir."

"I hope I shall yet have that pleasure."

"You stay long in these parts, do you?"

"You know when you arrive—you know not when you go."

"Oh, you're at your proverb-sayings!"

"I mean that I may leave here in a few days, or stay for years."

"You! where are you bound, Doctor?"

"For Mrs. Courtlandt's—somewhere down the valley here."

"For where!" cried the mountaineer, starting and turning full upon his guest.

CHAPTER IV.

HOW HUNTER JOHN'S RIFLE WAS BEWITCHED AND BY WHOM.

A LONG pause followed this expression of astonishment on the part of the mountaineer. He seemed to doubt the seriousness of his guest—he, apparently, could not believe he was in earnest.

“Mrs. Courtlandt's!” said he.

“Certainly my friend!”

“Down the valley here?”

“Why, somewhere in the neighborhood. I can't say precisely where.”

“And why are you going there, sir?” asked the old hunter.

“I have business,” said the traveler with the air of a man whose private affairs are invaded by idle curiosity.

The mountaineer shook his head.

“No good will come of it,” said he.

“How so?”

“Mrs. Courtlandt, sir, don't stand well in these parts; and I'm free to say I don't like her myself, though her brother is my good friend.”

“You! do you know her?”

“I've been to her house off and on these five years, and I never missed seeing some deviltry there.”

The traveler bent a steady grave look upon his host.

“What do you mean by deviltry?” he said.

“She's good friends with one I won't name,” said the

hunter, dropping his voice; "there's all sorts of things there that oughtn't to be. Don't ask me about it."

"And why don't you like her?"

The mountaineer with a great effort, replied shortly,

"She spelled my rifle!"

"What is 'spelled?'"

"Bewitched some people call it."

The traveler did not smile this time; but fixing himself calmly in his seat, and quietly smoking:

"Tell me how that was, my friend," said he.

"Well, that I'll do soon," his host replied. "There's a buck about here, in these mountains, half as big and strong again as any deer they ever run in these parts. We call him *Old Satan*; you see that name was given him because the rifle ball has never touched him, or," and the hunter lowered his voice, "passed through him and not given him any hurt. *I* don't believe that myself, but old father Brant, one of the best beads in the hills here, says it's so—and only the other day coming along here, he told me he was done hunting the varmint. He couldn't stand it."

"Have you hunted him?"

"I'm going to tell you. Yes I have, and I'm most nigh wearied out; I thought I had strong legs and pretty good wind, but that buck has tired out me and Elkhorn—knocked us both up."

"Who is Elkhorn?"

"My horse."

"Well about your rifle and the rest."

"I'm coming to that. I hunted the buck I've been telling you about till I was tired, and I had never yet got a shot at him. I thought if I could draw a clear bead on him he was gone. The other morning I passed by Mrs. Courtlandt's early and was so thirsty that I nigh gave up. I went in to get a drink, and she was up that early, fixing some plants or other in a big book and writ-

ing under 'em. The room was full of things I hadn't any liking for—strange outlandish jars and machines—and I most repented coming. She gave me the water very polite, and took my rifle to look at, and asked me if I had killed the buck. I told her no, and then she laughed, and begun turning something, and said she would fix my gun so I couldn't miss. She made me rest my right hand on the table, and touch my gun to the top of a bottle. I did it! and I felt as if the lightning struck me! I dropped the gun and stood there without knowing where I was, and the first thing I knew I was in the path outside, and she closed the door. All she said to me was, laughing, 'Go on, hunter John! go on, hunter John!'

The mountaineer put up his sleeve to wipe the perspiration from his brow.

"And you think your gun was bewitched?"

"Sure as you're there," he said in a low voice, "I have had three shots at that buck, and I've missed him every time. I had a clear bead and shot steady. It was no use. The ball went crooked!"

The stranger mused.

"And you are still hunting that buck?"

"I'm going to hunt him till one of us is dead."

"And you think I had better not go to Mrs. Courtlandt's do you, my friend?"

"You know best."

"I do; and I must go and see her: but I shall see you all here again."

"Why," cried the mountaineer hospitably, "I just remember now. Wife and Sally are going to have a merry-making here to-morrow evening, and you must come. Sally!" he called aloud.

"Here I am father," the girl replied. She was at his elbow and heard the conversation.

"Tell doctor—my poor old memory."

"Doctor Thomas!" said the stranger, addressing his reply to the young girl.

"Well, tell Doctor Thomas," said the hunter to his daughter, "that we'll be mighty glad to see him."

"Indeed, I will, sir—we all will be mighty glad. It is to-morrow evening about sundown."

The traveler was about to repeat his low bow, when remembering himself he said,

"I'll certainly be here, Miss Sally."

"And now," said hunter John, "to bed!"

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CHAPTER V.

THE STRANGER AND SALLY BY THE BROOK SIDE.

THE traveler was shown into one of the small upper rooms of the hunter's dwelling, where he found a comfortable and very clean bed prepared for him. Without delay he threw off his clothes and soon forgot in deep slumber the fatigue and the incidents of the day.

He was aroused at a very early hour by the barking of dogs and the winding of a horn, under the little window of his chamber. Then the hoofstrokes of a horse were heard; and finally the notes of the horn and the yelping of the dogs, receded from him and died away gradually in the distance. He rose, and looking through the window saw the tall form of hunter John, mounted on his enormous steed, and followed by his dogs, disappearing among the pines of the mountain side. He was going to hunt his buck.

The traveler dressed and descended. At the foot of the stairs he met his hostess who gave him a fair good-morning, and busily set about preparing breakfast, in which she was assisted by a small negro girl. Her guest strolled down toward the brook.

He was standing on its bank and admiring the fresh morning light scattered upon the waves, the mountain pines, and the green-topped knolls of the glen, when all at once he perceived the daughter of his host beneath him in a little green nook which a large mossy rock separated

from the more open part of the banks. She was seated on a part of this rock which projected over the stream, and with bare feet, was playing with the water, and apparently lost in thought. Beside her lay two small shoes and a pair of stockings which she had, it seemed, just removed from her feet.

The traveler walking on the soft moss approached her silently and touched her shoulder. The girl started up, coloring and hiding her feet.

"My goodness, sir! how you frightened me!" she said.

"I am not such an awful personage am I?" he asked, smiling.

"No, sir," the girl replied with a laugh, while she busied herself—turned away from the stranger—in putting on her shoes and stockings, "but you came so sudden."

"You were washing your feet, were you?"

She looked down.

"I'm sorry I disturbed you in such a praiseworthy employment."

"Oh, it's no matter," she replied pouting, "I wasn't washing my feet. I just came down here."

"Come now we won't quarrel, Miss Sally," said the stranger dropping his sarcastic tone, "I was only joking, and you'll find I never mean any thing, as I shall, I hope, see you often."

"Are you coming to our frolic, sir?"

"Oh, yes."

"It is this evening, remember."

"How can I forget it—but excuse me, I am again at my foolish ceremony. Come, let us go back to breakfast. Will you take my arm—or here is my hand."

The young girl took the proffered arm, and they returned toward the house.

"It is a beautiful morning," the stranger said, "those tall pines in the bright sun are grander than any thing

of Poussin's, and the air is as pure and delightful as possible. Only one thing is needed, Miss Sally—a song."

"Well, sir," said the girl, who had by this time become more familiar with her father's guest, and less embarrassed in his presence, "I will sing for you, if I can. What do you like?"

"Do you sing Scottish songs? I prefer them to all others."

"And so do I, sir. Oh, they are so sweet!"

"Sing me 'Auld Robin Gray.'"

"I'll try, sir; that is one of my favorites," said Sally; and in a clear, birdlike voice, she went through the ballad.

"An excellent soprano," muttered the stranger to himself, with a smile, "he's gone beyond hope. Very well."

"What did you say?"

"This is such a beautiful song."

"Very, sir."

"And it is so true. Now tell me," he said, laughing, "would you like to marry an Auld Robin of that sort?"

"No, never," said Sally Myers, with uncommon emphasis, "I'd never marry such a person, as long as I lived!"

The stranger laughed.

"And pray, what sort of a person would you marry?" he said.

"That is my business," she replied, coloring and laughing, with a bright glance at the stranger.

"What do you think of light hair and beard?"

"I prefer dark hair, sir."

The stranger laughed so heartily at this, that he could not for several minutes command his voice.

"No personal reflections, I hope, Miss Sally," he said; "now *my* hair and beard are light!"

In this strain they ran on in merry talk, until they reached the house—Sally's natural gayety and ease hav-

ing by this time entirely returned, under the genial effect of the stranger's hearty and good-humored manner.

They found breakfast nearly ready, and the table being set in a trice by the girl, who blamed herself for idling at the brook—"though *he* had made her stay," she said, laughing, and pointing to the stranger—they soon sat down to an excellent and plentiful meal.

Half an hour afterward, Doctor Thomas was again mounted, and on his way down the valley. He would certainly return to the merry-making that evening, he said.

CHAPTER VI.

SHE WAS A WITCH!

THE traveler continued his way down the valley, along the banks of the brook, in a very cheerful and contented mood. He seemed to be much amused at something, and at times a gay laugh would escape from his lips; or muttering "parbleu!" or "ma foi," he would give his splendid sorel the rein, and scour along in pure merriment of heart.

The beautiful morning, it is true, was partly the cause of this singular conduct on the part of Doctor Thomas. There is nothing so inspiriting, as a ride on a magnificent morning in October, just after a comfortable breakfast, and through a fair land—such as our traveler was traversing. The Virginia mountains are at all times beautiful and commanding, but their attractions are greatly enhanced by the "fall days."

The sun, by this time, had climbed above the heights of the "Third Hill," and was flooding the whole valley, with fair bright light, and laughing in the waves of the little streamlet, and scattering his fire-tipped arrows into the obscurest depths of the old, close-set pines, which clothed the "Sleepy Creek" mountain side, until every mossy rock, and fallen trunk was visible. Moreover, it flashed from the myriad colors of the autumn leaves—the purple of the maple, the yellow of the little alder-tree, and the crimson berries of the dogwood. These beautiful mountain dwellers seemed to rejoice in the warm, pure

light, and through them ran gay breezes, that like merrily-flying children, scattered behind them a rustling mirth and laughter.

Half an hour's ride brought the stranger in sight of a small dwelling, situated on the western slope of the valley, and surrounded with dark-waving, slender-trunked pines. The roof was thatched, and many little ornaments about the gate, and door step, and windows seemed to denote that it was the residence of a female.

The stranger hastened on joyfully, and throwing himself from his horse, which he secured to a bough, ran to the door, and knocked. It was opened by a tall, elderly female, of refined appearance, and with a very calm manner. She was clad, however, in a very singular dress. She wore a man's collar secured by a black cravat, something enveloped her figure from the waist up, not unlike an ordinary boy's roundabout, and her feet—coming out plainly from her short skirt—were cased in elegant moccasins of deer-skin, ornamented with beads, and fringe.

Behind this singular figure, a table was visible, on which a host of jars and retorts, and small machines were heaped, and the air of the room was very strongly perfumed with sulphur. The stranger saw all this at a glance, and smelling the sulphur, thought of hunter John and his superstition. But he had no time for further thought; the elderly female looked at him a moment with great astonishment apparently, then seemed to struggle with her recollections, then—when the stranger's face assumed its ordinary pleasant smile—came forward and fell upon his neck, crying and smiling through her tears.

"Welcome, welcome," said she, "I got your letter and have waited long for you. Come in."

And kissing the stranger affectionately, with tears of joy in her eyes, she drew him into her dwelling. The door closed behind them.

CHAPTER VII.

MERRY-MAKING IN THE MOUNTAINS.

PUNCTUAL to the time mentioned by his host, Doctor Thomas as we shall in future call him, arrived at the abode of the hunter.

A large crowd had already assembled—or we should rather say a goodly number of the valley dwellers. In our day a “large crowd” at a festival of any sort suggests several hundred persons; and there were scarcely several dozen here. Doctor Thomas entered and was soon on good terms with every one; for faithful to his promise to Sally he had abandoned entirely his “set up” air as she called it to herself, and was a very model of good-humored frankness and ease. The supper was to come after the dancing and other amusement, and just as the Doctor entered, they had commenced a Virginia reel.

The fiddler—high perched above the guests upon a lofty eminence provided for the purpose—struck up inspiringly a gay heart-enlivening strain; the rude, but frank and pleasant looking mountain “boys and girls” commenced flying through the dance, and a buzz of voices, at times almost a shout, rose to the ceiling, and scattering itself through the windows, died away in the pine trees of the mountain side. All was merriment and laughter, joy and uproar. Then commenced a jig. It is possible our readers are not familiar with the nature of this ancient pastime. It was danced in this manner. Two persons male and female entered the circle cleared as for

an ordinary dance, and standing opposite each other commenced a slow and measured movement which they accompanied with many bows, smiles, and complimentary words. The gentleman's duty was to compliment in every possible manner the execution of his companion—if any portion of her toilet became disordered, or awry, to politely inform her of that fact, and during all these ceremonious observances never for a moment to cease keeping perfect time to the music, whose duty was to gradually grow more rapid, until one of the dancers unable to keep up with it or overcome by fatigue acknowledged him or herself vanquished.

Doctor Thomas was looking at the dancers with great interest, and at times laughing heartily at their odd movements, when his host came up to him.

"Well here you are," said hunter John with his placid smile, "how did you spend the day—whereabouts I mean?"

"Why, at Mrs. Courtlandt's."

"Really now?"

"Really, my friend; I did not find her the terrible personage you made her out. You must know I have come here to look about me; who knows but I may settle."

The hunter shook his head.

"Did you see nothing strange?" he asked.

"Why yes—some singular things, I confess."

"And what did she say to you?"

"There you are too much for me. I believe she observed that it was a fine day."

"I see that you don't mean to let out on the matter—and you may be right. It's none of my business. But I went again to-day and missed that buck."

"You were away I know when I left here this morning."

"I was after him, and chased the buck from one end of the mountain to t'other, but it was no use. I'll die hunting that buck."

At this moment a noise at the door attracted every body's attention and turning round, Doctor Thomas saw descending from a small carry-all a party of guests who had just arrived. The hunter went to welcome them, and the Doctor's eyes were immediately riveted upon them as they entered and received the merry greeting. The party was composed of an old fine-looking German—father Von Horn he was called by every one—a beautiful woman of twenty-one or two, and a young man of nineteen with long dark hair, and dressed in the usual garb of mountain hunters, as indeed were almost all the male guests of the company.

A few minutes afterward the signal for supper was given, and the crowd flocked into the adjoining room.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE DOCTOR OVERHEARS A PRIVATE CONVERSATION.

THE large table was spread with every variety of eatables, and the repast seemed to be a general commingling of breakfast, dinner and supper. Meats of every sort—venison, bear, ham, fowls, vegetables as for a dinner, coffee, Jamaica rum, great flagons of thick creamy milk—these were the components of the profuse mountain supper.

Every one hastened to help himself and his partner, and it was refreshing to see with what gusto the young damsels applied themselves to the rich ham and venison, and how little “shamefacedness” they exhibited at eating before their sweethearts. The supper was a merry one—and as the old fiddler on his perch in the next room had been plentifully supplied the first thing, and his heart enlivened with a huge cup of rum, music was not wanting to add to the universal mirth.

Two persons formed the only exceptions to the general merriment—they alone did not add to the terrible uproar by the sound of their voices. These persons were Sally Myers—who was clad in a pretty white dress which set off charmingly the fresh happy beauty of her face—and the young man who had entered with father Von Horn. They were whispering.

“I have not seen you for so long—nearly three days,” said the girl.

The young man replied to this tender reproach more by his look than his words. But, speaking in the same tone :

"I have been kept away, darling," he said.

"By what, Barry?"

"Oh, I could not tell you all now," he replied with a long happy look, "but if you could walk out to-morrow morning—"

"Oh yes, I could."

"Say to the Moss Rock on the Sleepy Mountain," said the young man.

"Indeed, I will, dear Barry."

"At sunrise then, dear."

"And at the Moss Rock."

"Yes."

It was plain that the conversation was becoming very stupid, but the lovers made up for this by their looks.

"You didn't know I am at the branch now nearly every morning did you, Barry—early I mean."

"Down at the branch?"

"Yes. I go down there very often—nearly every day: the place is so pretty, and I think of you, you know."

"Of me, dear?"

"Yes, and I am very happy; I was down there this morning, and what do you think happened to me?"

"Happened to you?"

"Just as I had my feet in the cool water with my shoes off, down came Doctor Thomas, the gentleman who came yesterday—"

"And frightened you nearly to death; eh, Miss Sally!" said the voice of the doctor behind the lovers.

The girl started, and the young man turned round, with a face flushed and a little angry.

"I did not know you were so near, sir," said Barry, coldly.

"Oh, my friend it is my place; I am a doctor. Now you know the French proverb—or rather you probably don't know it, so I say nothing more."

The young man seemed both angry and embarrassed.

A singular smile passed across the face of Doctor Thomas and turning to Sally :

"You returned me good for evil, however," he said, "how sweetly you do sing, and how soon you sang at my solicitation."

Sally pouted and looked annoyed ; the young man angry. But at that moment one of the young girls ran up and catching the doctor by the arm cried to him :

"Oh sir, come if you please ! Nina Lyttelton says she has half cut her hand off and won't have any one but you to fix it."

Doctor Thomas chuckled to himself, and with a low bow turned to follow his conductress. At the other end of the room the lady with the cut hand was seated on a wicker bench calling for the doctor, and wringing her pretty hand.

"I am here, madam," said the doctor, with a low bow ; and he smiled.

CHAPTER IX.

THE DOCTOR COMMENCES A MILD FLIRTATION.

THE hand was not badly cut, but it was a very pretty hand, and the arm attached to it quite as beautiful. It was not long before the fair lady was once more smiling.

"Are these cuts ever dangerous, doctor," asked Mrs. Nina Lyttelton with a languid smile.

"Not very, madam. We doctors are very unwilling to confess that any thing is dangerous. That would imply that there was a possibility of losing our patients—which we never admit until they are so unfortunate as to die."

Mrs. Lyttelton laughed.

"And you cure every hurt, do you?"

"All but heart wounds, madam," the doctor replied with a bow to the fair widow.

"Those you can not cure?"

"Wholly unsuccessful, madam. I have seen many scales of physicians' fees—but never such a clause as: 'To curing one young person crossed in love,' so much. No, that is beyond our skill."

"Heigho!" sighed Mrs. Lyttelton, "I believe it is true, nothing can cure some things."

"A profound remark," said the doctor laughing.

"As long as the heart is not touched—in both senses doctor—the patient may recover."

"The inmost heart—yes."

"What do you mean?"

"I mean that often grief is a fancy—sorrow a chimera."

Mrs. Lyttelton became unaffectedly grave. She had just thought of her husband who had died about two years before. But the light and merry nature of her character soon banished this fleeting regret, and she turned again to the smiling cavalier before her.

“But do you not believe that persons often die of love—when they are crossed?”

“I do, I confess, madam—though I have heard it asserted that such a thing is folly—mere imagination.”

“And what medicine do you administer to such people? You may not be able to cure, but you attempt the cure, do you not?”

“Why yes, madam.”

“Well suppose Mr. —— or Mr. —— in Martinsburg were to complain to you of melancholy, loss of appetite, depression, and utter dislike of every thing around them——”

“I would ask the origin of all this.”

“Well suppose they assured you that the cruelty of some young girl had plunged them into this state of mind; what would you prescribe?”

“I should prescribe a visit to Meadow Branch Valley, madam, and the acquaintance of Mrs. Lyttelton,” replied Doctor Thomas with a smile and a low bow.

“You are very gallant, doctor!” said his companion, laughing.

CHAPTER X.

A CHALLENGE PASSES.

AFTER supper the company again returned to the dancing-room, and again betook themselves to the merry reel, and wearying jig with new ardor. Sally Myers and her friend Barry were still talking, though now more reservedly since the doctor had surprised them; and seemed disposed to withdraw themselves as much as possible from the gay crowd.

Doctor Thomas soon surrendered Mrs. Lyttelton to some one else, and approaching a number of young men who were assembled at the door, he listened with much inward mirth to their critical comments on the figures, dress, and general appearance of the young gentlemen and ladies then engaged in dancing. Still the doctor's eye dwelt with profound interest through all, upon the young man Barry, who was talking with Sally Myers in a corner a few feet off. The smile would at times disappear from the stranger's face, and a look of love and tenderness impossible to describe, light up his countenance and soften every feature; then he would mutter to himself, and his old sarcastic smile would return.

The young men after praising or abusing all the young girls of the company, came to Sally herself who was declared by universal acclamation, the beauty and darling of the mountains; now by "darling" much more was expressed than by the former word. Beauty was a good thing, and the "beauty" was naturally a much-desired personage by all, for dancing, berry-hunting, and riding;

but the "darling" was the loved one, the admired one, the *dear* of every body, and privileged to drive every one to distraction. When Sally was therefore called the "darling" of the valley, a very high compliment was intended to be paid her.

We were wrong in saying that she was universally praised. One young man said that she was "the silliest looking girl he had ever seen," a "mere child" and "not worth making a fuss about." The stranger saw Barry's head turn like lightning, and his large brilliant eye directed its glance toward the group of men. Five minutes afterward he had left the girl, and was at the young man's side.

"You were not abusing Sally Myers, gentlemen," he said calmly, "I hope I did not hear right just now; but I thought some one spoke of her as 'silly' and 'childish.'"

There was nothing threatening in this address—no anger in the young man's face; and the person who had uttered the words in question hesitated for a moment; had Barry spoken threateningly he would have gloried in repeating them.

In the midst of the pause Doctor Thomas' voice was heard:

"You address all here I believe, sir," said he, "and as that is the case, I reply for myself."

"Well, sir," said Barry, his face flushing.

"Not knowing whether you mean or do not mean to insult me equally with the rest, I would say—"

"You may understand my words as you fancy, sir," said the young man with flashing eyes, and lowering his voice.

The doctor smiled.

"Then of course there is no insult, sir," he replied; and turning round he commenced an indifferent conversation with one of the guests.

Barry went out to cool his flushed forehead, and to

gaze at the calm quiet moon, though he saw nothing but the face of the young girl. While thus sunk in thought he felt a hand upon his shoulder. He turned and saw Doctor Thomas.

"You insulted me just now, sir," said that gentleman, "and if I did not resent it then, I have not forgotten it."

Barry's face flushed then turned pale.

"Did you dare to say that Sally Myers was silly or childish?"

As he spoke the young man advanced a step, his form trembling with passion.

"One moment, sir," said the doctor, calmly; "I am a professional man, and I do not wish to fight on small provocation. Your insult to me, your tone of voice, all, was much more serious than any criticism of a young girl could—"

"I ask you if you said it?"

"Suppose I did."

"Then one of us shall leave this place forever."

"You are determined then to fight me, are you, sir?" said Doctor Thomas.

"Yes, I will fight you in any way!"

"Be cool! this red-hot way of talking answers no purpose. Well, you have insulted me or I have insulted you—no matter which. We'll fight. What weapons?"

The young man, with flashing eyes and passionate voice, replied to the doctor's cool words, with a single word—"Any!"

"Pistols then. I brought a pair with me, luckily."

"You thought it probable you would be called on to insult a young girl, I suppose?" said Barry with a sneer. The doctor muttered something to himself, and looked admiringly at the young man.

"No," he said, "I did not. But we are losing time: the place is the next thing."

"Any where!" said Barry.

"Well, say to-morrow morning then, about sunrise, at the 'Moss Rock,' on the side of the Sleepy Creek Mountain—eh?"

"Or, here and now!" said the young man, grinding his teeth; "you spy and eaves-drop very well for a professional gentleman, sir!"

The doctor winced, and a slight smile flitted across his countenance.

"It is true I heard your appointment with your sweetheart," said he, "but I assure you it was unintentional, sir—wholly."

"Assure me on your word of *honor*, sir," said the young man, "and perhaps I shall believe you!"

"The devil take him," muttered the doctor, laughing, to himself. Then he said to his companion:

"We lose time in all these recriminations, sir, and should be arranging our affair. I am a good shot, and shall kill you, I know—let it be at an early day."

"I shall consider my life well lost, sir," said the young man coldly—and suddenly recollecting how useless his anger was—"well lost, if lost defending a young girl from insult."

The doctor seemed to be carried away by admiration of this sentiment, and was about to hold out his hand, when he suddenly recollected himself.

"Well, sir," he said, "we will arrange this matter satisfactorily within the next few days. These affairs will always keep; though I remember at Paris—but we are in Virginia, a much better place, by-the-by. We will defer, if you please, our arrangements. But remember, I am the challenged party, and have the choice of weapons."

Then politely saluting his companion, who scarcely deigned to move his head in return for the profound congé of his adversary, the doctor took his way again toward the house.

CHAPTER XI.

THE DOCTOR MEDITATES BY MOONLIGHT.

It was nearly midnight when father Von Horn, that worthy and much-beloved German patriarch gave the signal for separating. He rose and called to him his daughter Nina, and Barry. But it was some time before Barry could be found, inasmuch as he and Sally Myers had stolen away from the company (now uproarious and extravagant with their blindman's buff, and boot-binding and other rough games), and in the quiet moonlight were gazing into each other's eyes and talking the usual nonsense of lovers alone and by moonlight.

The company we said was uproarious; some of the young men, it must be confessed, had paid too exclusive devotion to the great bowl of punch which, with arms akimbo and smiling countenance, stood ready to welcome all comers on a side table. The consequence of this indiscretion was deplorable. Many maidens on that night quarreled with their sweethearts for their want of attention, and many more declared that this was the last party they would ever attend riding behind their chosen cavaliers. It was afterward, however, observed that these complaints ended in nothing, and that the next party was as well attended, and in the same fashion as this one at Hunter John's; and this leads us irresistibly to the conclusion that beaux are indispensably necessary to young ladies every where; and that young ladies, where a merry-

making is in question, have much Christian charity and forgiveness.

It was a gay scene—the parting of the company ; and only the pencil of some artist-humorist could convey an adequate idea of the strange mountain vehicles which drew up to the door to receive their guests. The young ladies experienced much difficulty in mounting gracefully behind their swains—the moonlight being so very clear, and ankles cased in white stockings so painfully visible : but at last the guests were all mounted, or snugly ensconced in their carryalls and light wagons, and began to take their departure with many good-by's and many parting words. Old father Von Horn lingered last—that worthy father Von Horn who, shaking his broad chest with internal laughter waited patiently for Barry, and would not see or laugh at Sally's blushes, when coming in with the young man she found the old man and Nina waiting for him !

Doctor Thomas had made himself very officious in assisting the young ladies to their seats behind their cavaliers—and we are bound as faithful historians, to say that he was much more ready and polite when young and pretty girls needed his services. His officiousness was not, however, by any means disagreeable to the damsels who had to endure it. There was much grace, and unbounded politeness in the doctor's manner and tone ; and the young ladies in question had rather neglected their ordinary beaux throughout the evening for the handsome stranger. More than one small hand grasped his own with friendly warmth ; and more than one voice at parting emphasized the first syllable of “good-by” at parting. These the sarcastic stranger greeted with a suppressed chuckle as they disappeared. He found at last that no lady but Mrs. Nina Lyttelton remained, and he assisted her to her vehicle, or rather her father's with extraordinary attention ; the reward for which was an urgent invi-

tation to visit her at her father's, "just up where the mountains came together." The doctor bowed and promised. As he turned, his quick eye pierced the deep shadow of the doorway, and he saw Barry and the young girl exchange a tender kiss.

"Where's Barry?" cried father Von Horn, shaking with merriment.

"Here, Uncle," said the young man; and bidding his host and hostess good-by, he took his place beside Nina. The carryall then rolled off; and Doctor Thomas going to the chestnut to which he had tied his horse, mounted and riding up to the door, also took his leave. He was going back, he said, to Mrs. Courtlandt's; she had promised him a lodging for a few days, and he had found it always the best policy not to disappoint the ladies. With this gallant speech, and a friendly bow to his entertainers, he took his departure.

Pursuing the road running along the bank of the brook, the stranger gave himself up to merry thoughts—to judge from his amused smile. The night invited him to meditation. Nothing stirred the calm hour but the hoof-strokes of his horse, the bubbling of the streamlet, and the far away dying shouts of the merrily-galloping revelers scattering to their homes. The Doctor mused.

"A fine evening I have had," he said half aloud, "and a pretty place I am now going to—the house of a witch. I rather like that Mrs. Lyttelton. 'Like her?' I think I shall fall in love with her—yes, I am determined to do so on the first favorable opportunity. What a charming child is Sally—never have I seen so much beauty of character united to so much grace; she'll make a good wife. And that handsome Barry! A perfect hero, and would have eaten me whole at a word; I'm glad I tried him. It was a sudden thought. And now, Doctor Thomas, you have a bloody duel on your hands—you have lost none of your folly; you are now at twenty-five—more or less—

just as foolish as at eighteen, when—yes! You couldn't rest till you had got a duel on your hands;" the stranger chuckled, "yes, an awful encounter, for there's no 'back out' in Barry—my young hero!"

And giving rein to his horse the stranger went along rapidly; weary of his musings, it seemed, and desirous only of a good bed to rest in after the long evening and the trying exercise of the reels he had gone through.

CHAPTER XII.

A RIFLE-SHOT AND ITS CONSEQUENCES.

AT eight o'clock in the morning, the stranger was aroused and informed that his professional services were needed, and urgently. He dressed, and in a few moments issued forth; at the door was hunter John Myers, mounted on his large sable steed; but none would have recognized him for the merry, hearty-voiced host of the preceding evening. He was pale, his form drooped toward the neck of his horse, and his eyes were red with dried-up tears.

"Doctor!" he said in a trembling voice, "will you come and see my Sally? She's dying!"

Doctor Thomas sprang toward the hunter so suddenly that the large black horse, who was covered with sweat, and foaming at the mouth, threw up his head and half reared back from the gateway.

"What say you!" he cried, "dying!"

"Come on, doctor!" the hunter said, "I'll tell you as we go along. Where's your horse?"

Doctor Thomas ran to the place where his horse was installed, and in five minutes had saddled him and was mounted. He joined the mountaineer, and they both put spurs to their steeds and took the road to the hunter's dwelling.

"Now, my friend," said Doctor Thomas, "I see you are much agitated, and some accident must have happened to your daughter. But remember that she is such a favorite with you—as is natural and proper—that you

can not justly estimate the hurt or injury she has received. Much more probable is it, that you overrate the danger. Come, tell me all."

"That I'll do in short words. I went out this morning as usual to hunt that buck I've been telling you of, often and over, and I got on his track. I thought this time I'd run him down, and I believe I became sort o' deranged about him; my head seemed to be turning round, I didn't know how to hunt, and I hallooed on the dogs as if the devil was being run down and done for. Don't think I had been drinking and my brain wasn't clear. No, it wasn't that. Besides that, I'm powerful strong in the head, and God has given me the strength to drink as much as three of most men—I don't feel it. Well, it wasn't liquor, but I was sort o' cracked—I didn't know what I was about, and my head didn't feel right. I thought that devil of a varmint was laughing at me—it was the wind, I reckon—and Belt, my crack dog, seemed to be crying as if something hurt him."

The doctor shook his head.

"Too much cerebral excitement lately, my friend; this deer will be your death yet, if you are not more careful. But continue: you had vertigo. Well."

"Well, I reckon I had something of that sort, and I followed that buck four mortal hours from one end of the mountain side to t'other; then he crossed over toward Sleepy Creek! then he doubled back toward my house and took down the mountain nigh a place called 'Moss Rock'—a big rock with a tall pine tree growing out of it. Then I thought I had him, and I got crazy! I pushed Elkhorn down the mountain path as if it was this level road we are galloping on! I passed somebody, but I didn't know him; it was Barry I thought; my head this time *was* turning round! for I saw something white-like about two or three hundred yards before me! and thought it was the buck—and—"

"Unhappy man! you have killed your daughter!" cried the doctor, with pale face and trembling lips.

"Oh, my Sally! oh, my heart's dear! oh, my baby!" groaned the hunter, almost reeling in his seat. The doctor thought he was going to faint, and still galloping caught him by the arm. He shrunk at the hand laid on him; but putting it aside, said more calmly,

"No, doctor, I'm not sick—my head's pretty clear now. Come, we must get on!"

The horses thundered along; and mouth to mouth, devoured the space as if the excitement of their riders possessed them also, and they felt and comprehended the danger of the valley's "darling."

At this rate they soon arrived at the hunter's; and the doctor immediately hastened to Sally's chamber. The old dame was sitting at her daughter's bedside, vainly trying to suppress her tears—and as the doctor passed into the little room, which as we have already informed the reader, lay immediately behind the main apartment, he observed Barry leaning with his head on the window-sill, his face in his hands.

Sally was lying very easily, and seemed to suffer little pain. A moment's examination showed the doctor that the rifle ball had not inflicted a mortal wound, having only lodged in the shoulder, and this comfortable intelligence he communicated to the family. He then removed the coarse wrapping, dressed the wound, having of course extracted the bullet first, and bandaging the fair shoulder with softer stuff, administered a slight opiate, and left the young girl in a quiet slumber.

"And now, my friend," said the doctor with a smile, "as Miss Sally is comfortably asleep, will you let me have some breakfast? I am somewhat hungry, inasmuch as I have ridden well this morning."

The doctor was made comfortable with that rapidity and deference which for some reason, is always the lot of

the members of this profession, and his appetite was soon satisfied. The hunter and his guest then sat down outside the door, whither they were followed by Barry, who silently returned the doctor's bow.

"I broke off when I was telling you about it, doctor," said Hunter John, "but I hadn't much more to say. My head was all running round, and I don't know how I sighted my gun but I shot; and then I found I had struck down my child, my darling!"

And bending down, the hunter let fall two large tears.

"Barry was there and helped me, or I would have gone mad straight off. Oh, how could I keep my head at seeing my baby there weltering in her blood, and all dabbled over with it—her neck and all! Doctor, I ain't much in this world, and I don't know much besides bringing down game, but for all that I don't believe that child could love me better if I was the highest in the land! My little flower that I went and cut down—my pretty little flower!"

And burying his face in his hands, the mountaineer bent to his knee with deep sobs and sighs. Barry, with folded arms and eyes swollen with grief, leaned against a tree.

"Come, come, sir!" said the doctor, "this is unreasonable. You certainly did not mean to strike your daughter with the ball from your rifle. It was aimed at what you thought was a deer; plainly the fault of the retina, not yours. Miss Sally is not very dangerously wounded, and all that will result from this, will be a fever and some weeks' confinement. At the end of that time my friend, she will be well—perfectly."

And as if without intending it, he glanced at Barry. His head was turned away and he was weeping; the good news was too much for his weakened nerves.

"May the Lord grant it," said the mountaineer; "Hunter John couldn't stand the loss of his baby long. He would go after her."

"Don't be uneasy," said the doctor, "I shall come here every day to see her, and a month will entirely cure her. Still you would do well to send to Martinsburg for Dr. Harrison or some one. You know nothing of me."

"Yes I do, doctor; I looked at you when you were fixing the wrappings and taking out that ball from my pretty baby's shoulder, and I knew from the way you did it that you ain't an every-day doctor."

The stranger smiled: he appreciated the compliment.

"I studied in Europe," he replied, "and I learned there what few learn in this country—that handling the patient is much. It's best to be easy and quick. They are far beyond us, over the water."

"To tell you the truth, that's why I like you," said the hunter, "you fixed that shoulder like she was your own baby; and if you cure her, there'll never be a friend who'll go further or do more for you than John Myers."

"Good! I think she'll get well herself, however, my friend."

"I begin to think so too."

"I have had worse wounds to dress than that—and there is no fracture—"

"Fractures you're talking of," said the hunter, "well, I just bethought me; will you look at my arm? It's hurt me all along, but I hadn't time to 'tend to it."

"What's the matter?"

"I haven't looked, but it hurt me dreadful when you caught hold of me in the road."

The doctor examined and found that Hunter John's arm was badly fractured. He had rolled under his horse on seeing his daughter fall, and Elkhorn had struck the arm with one of his heavy hoofs, and broken it. Worthy hunter! "he had not had time to attend to it."

CHAPTER XIII.

NINA AND THE DOCTOR.

A WEEK or two glided quietly away, and the doctor every day called to see his patient. A mild fever, not dangerous, succeeded the young girl's accident, and in her feverish sleep she would mutter and murmur words which showed plainly whither her thoughts were wandering. At such times, the doctor would ask leave to sit and watch her alone, and thus he was the only confidant, so to speak, of those unconscious revelations.

Sally would often close her eyes and seem to sleep while her mind was perfectly active; and at such times she would murmur, "Yes, Barry—you know you love me as well as I love you—and that's oh, so much! It is a lovely morning, and see how the stream goes by laughing! Are you happy, Barry? I love so to see the trees and rocks, and the moss—you are here with me, and that makes me love them more—let me lean my head on your shoulder. You shall fix my hair! See how tangled it is! I wouldn't let any body else fix my hair—but you shall, Barry dear! Oh me! I thought I saw that deer father hunts so often! I don't like that deer—he'll bring me bad luck. See how the sun shines on the mountain—if we had a little cottage up near the Moss Rock, just under the tall pine, we could live so happy! We would run over the meadow down to the brook, and gather the flowers that grow all about, every day—you know how pretty they are—the violets and primroses and buttercups.

Oh, I love them so dearly—and we wouldn't want to see any body but each other. Oh! we'd be so happy, dear!"

At such times, the doctor would shrug his shoulders with a slight inward laugh, and gently smooth the child's pillow. And she would open her eyes and smile.

One day Mrs. Nina Lyttelton came over to see Sally, as great numbers of her friends had done, on hearing of the sad accident. The doctor was there, and when she came out of the chamber met her.

"A fine day we have, madam!" he said, bowing and offering his hand. Nina shook hands.

"Beautiful, doctor," she said, "and I only wish dear Sally was well to enjoy it."

"Oh, don't fear. Another fortnight will complete her cure; she is already convalescent, and if you would tell Barry to come and comfort her—"

They exchanged a smile.

"You wicked doctors!" said the lady, "you suffer nothing to escape you! Now, how did you know that Sally was his sweetheart?"

Doctor Thomas shrugged his shoulders.

"We all unconsciously obey the gospel precept, madam," said he. "'He that hath ears let him hear,' is the only command of the Bible universally obeyed, I believe; well I have heard."

"I understand you."

"She was feverish—I would not mention it, as we of the profession have no right to speak of such matters, but you certainly know these children love each other."

"Oh, yes; it's the talk of the whole valley. Such children to love!"

The doctor laughed.

"You believe then that the heart must mature before this is possible."

"Women love more ardently than girls—do they not, doctor? what is the result of your experience?"

"My experience, fair lady? I have none. I have never been in love."

"You! at your age!"

"What do you estimate my age at?"

"Why, twenty-five or six."

"You have guessed nearly correctly—I could never speak as certainly of yours."

"And what do you think my age is?" asked Nina, laughing.

"Eighteen, madam—nineteen at most. It is the most attractive of all ages," said the doctor with a bow.

"I suppose next you'll say I am the most attractive of all your acquaintances!"

The doctor was plainly taken aback.

"You are called beautiful," he said.

"Ah, doctor, what if we are so called by indifferent, careless people. None here appreciate me." And the lady sighed.

"Pardon me, madam—there is one who does." And the doctor laid his hand upon his heart, with a look of admiration too profound not to be somewhat affected.

"Flatterer!"

"I never flatter, madam."

"And you think me beautiful?"

Doctor Thomas had found more than his match; that was plain.

"Beautiful, madam?" he said, "I find in you that rare and excellent combination of qualities which I have never met with save in a friend of my youth. *She* was a paragon of all excellence."

Nina laughed.

"I am very glad so gallant a man as Doctor Thomas has visited us," said she.

"And I that so charming a lady as Mrs. Lyttelton has met me."

"Such persons then, doctor—"

"So mutually suited—"

"So congenial in their tastes—"

"Should be—"

"Friends at least, doctor!"

"More than friends, I hope, madam!"

And after this mischievous and significant colloquy, the lady and gentleman bowing profoundly, separated, merrily laughing.

The doctor chuckled to himself throughout the whole day.

CHAPTER XIV.

BARRY GOES A-COURTING.

DOCTOR THOMAS was not deceived : and in fifteen days from that time Sally was out of bed, and could even in the pleasant October noontide stroll down to the brook. There seated on her favorite moss-clad rock, she would muse for hours very happily, or, better still, spend the morning in pleasant talk with Barry, who came over now almost every day.

One day, the conversation led to a subject which somewhat agitated the young girl:—their marriage. They had settled all this with the usual dispatch of lovers, and now Barry was anxious to go and get her father's and mother's consent, and be comfortably fixed before Christmas. Sally after much blushing and hesitation consented to this ; and Barry that very evening introduced the subject to the hunter, while they were sitting alone after supper. He shook his head.

"There's only one thing, Barry," he said, "which puts it entirely out. I've gone and made a vow that Sally shan't be married till she can wear a silk bought with the carcass of that cursed varmint I've been hunting. I'll never enjoy a happy minute till I circumvent that Satan—and before Sally can stand up with you I must bring him down."

Barry was far from being cast down by this strange resolution of the hunter.

"Well then, father John," he said, using the word

father much as we now use *uncle*, as a term of familiarity and affection, "well, so be it. Still I hope that Sally will be able to marry me before Christmas."

The hunter shook his head. Was he jealous of this young man who came thus coolly to ask him for his heart's treasure?

Barry did not press the matter, and he declared that evening to Sally that there was no real obstacle in the way of their nuptials. As to his duel with Doctor Thomas he had wholly forgotten that, lately. It was swallowed up with other trifles in Sally's illness. Sometimes it crossed his mind and damped his joy, or threw a cloud upon his hopeful thoughts; but he wisely resolved to allow his adversary to take the first step, as he regarded himself as the insulting party, and then he thought no more about it.

So a week or two glided past, and every day the hunter was on the track of the buck. That enchanted animal had a still more deadly enemy in Barry!

CHAPTER XV.

THE DOCTOR FOLLOWS BARRY'S EXAMPLE.

Two days after this interview, Doctor Thomas was passing by hunter John's on his way up the valley to see Mrs. Nina Lyttelton, who had occupied much of his leisure thought-time lately, when he observed the mountaineer busily engaged in some mysterious occupation at his door. He held a dog between his knees and in his right hand a hot iron.

Suddenly, a horrible howling echoed along the valley, and, released from his master's hands, the animal ran yelping into the pines.

The doctor stopped, and called out to know the cause of the howling. On becoming aware of the presence of the doctor, hunter John seemed much confused.

"I was burning Belt," said he.

"Burning him?"

"Yes, doctor; and if you don't know what burning a dog in the forehead's for, I can't tell you. Won't you stop?"

"No, my friend, I am going to pay a visit up the valley. So I am to apply elsewhere for information as to—your servant, Miss Sally, you are wholly well, I see, and really looking like a rose-bud."

Sally laughed.

"A very white one then, sir."

"Why, yes, but the bloom is coming back, and you'll soon bear the bell as usual among the mountain beauties."

"Oh, sir!"

"I have but one last prescription."

"What is that, sir?"

"That you shall mount behind me—my horse is perfectly gentle—and ride up the valley to Mr. Von Horn's. I really think the ride would do you good."

Sally's eyes sparkled.

"Oh, I should like so much to go, sir! Do you think it would be good for me?"

"Why, you may have a very dull time up there with only Mrs. Nina, and that young Mr. Barry, as you call him. But then you will have had your ride, and it will do you service. If you could stand the tedious visit now!" said Doctor Thomas, smiling.

Sally laughed and blushed, and her mother bringing out a large shawl, she was soon mounted behind the doctor and merrily conversing, they took the road to father Von Horn's—the large Dutch dwelling visible some five miles off at the "locking" of the mountains to the south.

They there found Nina and Barry—father Von Horn was out attending to his farm. He was about arranging every thing for the winter, they said, when he would return with his family to Martinsburg where he lived eight months in the year. It is not perfectly certain whether the absence of the old man was regretted or not, but the conversation was very merry and animated—between the doctor and Nina at least. As to Barry and Sally, they sat at a window some distance from the talkers, and spent two hours very foolishly, whispering and smiling softly at each other.

Father Von Horn gave the doctor and his "daughter Sally" a hearty greeting, asking them how all were down the valley, and whether hunter John had killed that buck yet? "He ought to be allowed to hunt him in peace—glancing at Barry—and two persons ought not to go after the poor deer at once. It gave him no chance!"

With such cheerful conversation and much hearty laughter, father Von Horn beguiled the half hour before dinner; and then the plentiful meal was spread before them; and then after more conversation they rose to go. Nina kissed Sally with great affection, and warned the doctor—with a flitting blush—to take care of her.

“Certainly, madam,” he said, “I value my little patient more than any thing in the world. I hurt her! or suffer any thing to!”

“Well, sir, you show good taste,” said Nina, half laughing, half pouting. “Good-by!”

The doctor placed the little arm of Sally carefully around his waist with one hand, while he took off his hat with the other and made the old German and his daughter a low bow. This time Nina undoubtedly thrust out her pretty lip.

As they went along, Sally perceived that Doctor Thomas was shaking with internal laughter.

“Why, what are you laughing so funnily at?” she asked, laughing herself.

“Oh! I couldn’t tell you, Miss Sally, if I tried; but I am ready to burst. A ride! a ride! that’s what I want. Would you like a ride?”

“Oh, yes!” said Sally, her eyes sparkling. And in a moment they were going at full gallop.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE PRACTICAL UTILITY OF BURNING A DOG IN THE FOREHEAD.

THEY went along at great speed, when the fine level valley road rolled out its white ribbon before them, and the bloom which they had laughed about soon came into Sally's cheek, and the light into her eyes again. The animal's gait was regular and easy, and by the time they had reached the bottom of hunter John's hill, the young girl looked like a different being, so rosy were her cheeks and her brow so laughing. She seemed to have caught the gorgeous crimson of the sunset-trees, and the light of the radiant heaven, and with the incarnate spring-time of her smile to make the autumn glories, merest folly—wholly out of place !

The doctor was pressed to spend the night, and finally he consented—making hunter John promise to awake him early. The hunter gave him a strange look, and said, "Please God that should be:" which Doctor Thomas tried in vain to understand.

"What were you burning your dog to-day for, friend?" he said, while they sat thoughtfully smoking before the blazing pine splinters, whose warmth the coolness of the October evening rendered far from unpleasant; "you did not tell me, recollect."

The hunter smiled.

"That ain't all," said he, "I've been to Mrs. Courtlandt's to-day since you passed by; and more has been done yet."

“What?”

“You’ll see, I hope. I’m hoping the time’s come. But suppose it does,” muttered the hunter, “what’ll I gain? Why on earth now should I be so anxious? Poor old fool! I’m not knowing what I do.”

The doctor endeavored in vain to extract from hunter John an explanation of these singular speeches; and soon after he was shown to his chamber. Very early he seemed to hear, as in a dream, the same trampling that formerly attracted his attention, then the subdued yelping of dogs, then the gradually dying notes of a horn—that seemed to sound from fairy land. Then all died away, and he slept again.

At sunrise he was suddenly aroused by the report of a rifle, which—borne on the echoes of the valley—came distinctly and clearly to his ears. He rose and dressed, and descended. He met his hostess and Sally who were already “stirring,” and asked them who had fired? They could not tell, but expected it was the hunter.

Suddenly a horn, ringing, joyful, and sonorous, rolled its clear music down the mountain side, and all paused, listening earnestly. It sounded again; then a third time. Sally clapped her hands and with a flushed face cried, “Oh! I believe father has killed that buck at last!”

And so the hunter indeed had. In half an hour he appeared on the bank of the stream with the enormous buck before him on his saddle; there the stranger met and congratulated him. They were soon before the house and the buck was laid on the grass. It was an animal of uncommon size—with antlers of extraordinary length and weight, and its hair was much lighter in color than usual. There could be but one such deer in a thousand herds.

The hunter did not appear as joyful as one would have expected at this realization of all his hopes and desires.

“When you saw me yesterday,” he said to his guest,

"I was burning my dog in his forehead, and we do that when any deviltry is in a hound—"

"Deviltry?"

"To be plain, when they are witched," said the hunter, "and Belt was as much witched as my rifle. Then I went down to Mrs. Courtlandt's and she took my rifle and unwitched that!"

Hunter John spoke doggedly, and the stranger did not contradict or interrupt him. He proceeded:

"I knew after that how it would be," he said, "and I can't say why I didn't brand the dog before, and get Mrs. Courtlandt to fix my gun; but I reckon I was afraid," added the hunter, ingenuously. "So this morning I went out after the buck, determined to bring him home with me, or wear myself out. Just up on the mountain side I met Barry, who was also hunting the varmint, and we took different ways looking for him. I knew his haunts though, and in half an hour I was on his track—he was started—and I knew it was the beast himself, for Belt don't run any other of late, and his tongue told me when the game was afoot. Well, I ran him from one end o' the valley to the other—doubled the mountain, and went after him along Sleepy Creek. I thought Elkhorn would a' burst—but he never failed, because he knew well enough that the buck was doomed. The varmint soon doubled again for the mountain and I followed him—I could see him easy now, and I followed him without holding Elkhorn in, though the mountain ain't a level road there. So we came—thunderin' down straight toward the house here—yonder you see the bridge path; and having a good sight of him, I dropped the bridge and leveling my gun, let him have it. But I missed—my rifle hadn't the deviltry out of it quite yet. I knew I hadn't touched him—but Belt was at his heels and he was tired. The next minute I saw him rearing on Moss Rock, and he fell over the precipice—the dogs after him.

Look there—Dapple is good for nothing! His hind leg and off foreleg is broke! Well, I was on him in no time. My arm still hurt me where it was broke and it was weakly, but that was nothing. I jumped off my horse, pitched into him, and got only this scratch here, before my knife was through his throat, and his neck was quivering!”

As he spoke, the hunter, with flashing eyes and flushed face, rolled up his sleeve and showed a deep wound in his shoulder. The doctor looked at the deer—his antlers were bloody.

“You are wounded!” he exclaimed, “run, Miss Sally, and get some linen.”

The girl, pale and startled, hastened to bring it. The hunter suffered his wound to be bandaged, with many “pshaws!”

At the moment he again rolled down his wide sleeve, as if nothing had happened, Barry made his appearance at the bottom of the hill, his horse white with foam and bathed in sweat. On seeing the deer, he threw himself from the seat and ran up the hill.

“Is he dead at last!” cried Barry.

The hunter smiled.

“As a door nail, Barry my boy; you can see for yourself.”

“Poor animal!” said the doctor laughing, “he was too fine a beast to be cut down in his pride—only to supply some hungry mouth with venison!”

Sally blushed, and looked at Barry.

“There’s more than that on his death, doctor—and I believe from your wicked way of laughing, you know it,” said the hunter. “Sally’s marriage to—but she’ll tell you all. I need rest. I’m most nigh worn out.”

“Your marriage, Miss Sally!” cried Doctor Thomas with well dissembled astonishment. The young girl blushed; and Barry seemed much disposed to interrupt

the speaker; only he did not know how to do so with propriety.

"So there's a marriage on the tapis is there? Well, I suppose you'll have a splendid supper on the strength of the buck, my dear host—I have no doubt *you* will enjoy a slice from the saddle."

"No," said hunter John.

"You won't eat him?"

"I am going this very morning to Martinsburg to sell him. Sally's got to be married in him."

"Married in him!"

The hunter laughed.

"I'm joking with you," said he, "I mean that the money I get for the varmint is going to buy her a white silk dress—yes, that very thing. My baby'll look pretty then, won't she?" said the hunter, tapping his daughter's cheek with a well pleased smile.

Sally, overcome with joy and diffidence, ran into her chamber, where throwing herself into a chair, she began to cry. But they were not sorrowful tears.

"And now, dame! some breakfast!" cried the hunter, "I'm off in an hour."

CHAPTER XVII.

THE RATTLE OF TONGUES.

A MONTH had flown onward, making the gorgeous forests still more brilliant in their coloring; the mountains still more beautiful; freshening still more the bracing air, which, long dreaming of the warmth of the summer sun, was loth to give up all at once the glories of his smile. But that smile if not so warm was brighter—and its splendor flashed along the morning streams, and broke above the waving trees at noon, and broadened to a red faced, silent burst of merry laughter, when across the mountain the great orb went dragging with him one more golden autumn day.

Barry had never thought the mountains so beautiful—though he made the discovery, very soon, that Sally's smile added much to their attraction.

At last the day approached for the marriage of the "young folks;" and Doctor Thomas averred that never in all his travels had he seen such a commotion; perhaps this was in consequence of Sally's great popularity with the young (and old too) of both sexes, in the neighborhood. Certainly, her wedding was looked forward to with rejoiceful expectation, and the young girl was scarcely suffered to "sew a stitch" for herself; her friends insisted on doing it all for her. Hunter John had brought back from Martinsburg what all considered a magnificent white watered silk, and dozens of consultations were held before the precise fashion of the dress was determined on. Nina

Lyttelton was here the loudest and most authoritative speaker.

"Oh! low necked by all means!" she cried. "Who would have a great stiff silk up to her throat?"

"But," suggested one of the young ladies, "it is not summer time."

"What of that?"

"Low necks are for summer!"

"Nonsense!" cried Nina, laughing.

"I know why you are for low necks!"

"Why?"

"You are wearing a low-necked dress now."

Nina laughed still more loudly.

"I appeal to Doctor Thomas," she said, as that gentleman entered, "if that is not the prettiest and most suitable."

"What, ladies?" asked the doctor.

"The neck bare in a bride."

"Why, now—"

"Come, doctor, you shall decide—"

"I can easily decide one question, madam; namely, whether such fashions are becoming. Mrs. Lyttelton has never looked more radiant."

Nina laughed.

"Still," said the doctor, "it seems to me only proper and reasonable, that Miss Sally herself should have some part in this discussion, as she is to wear the dress."

This decision was on all sides voted down, as ridiculous, and an unwarrantable innovation on established usage; and in the midst of the clamor Sally herself entered, looking like a rose-bud. The important question was finally decided, and the young girl was entering her room when the doctor made her a sign that he wished to speak to her.

"A present for you, Miss Sally, from your friend—or rather my friend, Mrs. Courtlandt," he said, giving her a costly pair of ear-rings.

"Oh, thank you!" said the girl, delighted; "that's just what I wanted: but do you think father would let me take them from—" she paused; and the doctor smiled.

"They are good friends now," he said, "since the gun is unwitched; but here he is, ask him."

Hunter John in fact entered at the moment.

"Where did your pretty ear-drops come from, pet?" said he; "your servant, doctor."

"From Mrs. Courtlandt, father."

The hunter looked grave; then laughed.

"I begin to think my old superstitious head has been making me think her too much of a witch," he said. "I used to see her oftentimes in Martinsburg, years back, and she wasn't such a dreadful person. It's only since she came to the mountains here, some four years ago, when her school was broke up, I have felt afraid of her. Most old people now are like me though—all were in the back times."

Then taking the jewels, and looking tenderly at his daughter, he said to the doctor:

"And you brought these, I reckon; well, Mrs. Courtlandt must have fallen in love with you; what do you say? ha! ha!"

"Why, I don't know."

"She's still handsome."

"Yes."

"And you're certain—come now, doctor—that she hasn't taken a fancy to you?"

"Why, she received me with a kiss when I arrived," said the doctor gravely; "and now I come to remember my friend, the care she takes of my wardrobe signifies much. That should have opened my eyes."

This speech threw the whole company into profound astonishment. It is probable that such was the intention of the speaker. Nina, however, said nothing; for "matters had become very serious" between herself and the

doctor lately, it was said. Doctor Thomas was immediately overwhelmed with questions; and for some minutes was in despair. The storm at last settled down, and he had an opportunity, all thought, of explaining himself.

Nina, above all, waited for this explanation; not that she feared a rival in Mrs. Courtlandt, but it is one peculiarity of that position in which this lady now stood toward the doctor, that the mind does not weigh clearly and decide rationally. Nina was therefore determined to quarrel with her suitor.

The doctor gave her no opportunity, however, but mentioning as a piece of pleasant and agreeable news that his friend Mrs. Courtlandt was then preparing a new coat and moccasins to attend the wedding, he took his departure. Having cast this bombshell into the midst of the company, he very rationally supposed that it would form the topic of conversation—and thus he himself escape “abuse;” and he was not mistaken.

No sooner had he disappeared, than the storm burst forth with overwhelming power.

“That Mrs. Courtlandt!”

“No better than a witch!”

“She’s handsome though.”

“You ought to be ashamed to say so—she handsome! with that old cap on her head and that odious boy’s roundabout!” cried Nina.

Every one laughed.

“Nina is jealous of her,” said one; “the doctor is her beau, you know, girls! and she can’t bear Mrs. Courtlandt.”

“I think Mrs. Courtlandt is still very handsome,” said another.

“And I think you very impudent,” said Nina, laughing, “to say the doctor is my beau!”

“You know he is, Nina.”

“I don’t care that for him,” snapping her fingers; “and

I'm sure," she added pouting, "he don't value me more than that himself."

"Why only yesterday he told me that he had lost his heart completely."

Nina blushed, and turning away hid her confusion by asking for "a piece of bobbin edge."

"Bobbin edge on that!" cried one.

"Certainly," said Nina.

"I never heard of such a thing! It won't suit!"

"I appeal to you, girls—"

"Yes!"

"No!"

"It will ruin it!"

"It will make it beautiful!"

And forgetting completely the affairs of Nina and the doctor, these young ladies again plunged into the weighty considerations of trimming, and assorting colors—at which point we leave them with great pleasure.

CHAPTER XVIII.

HOW THEY RAN FOR THE BOTTLE.

THE wedding morning dawned clear and auspicious, with a laughing sun above the evergreen pines, and on the many-colored woods of later fall; and a bracing freshness in the wandering wind that gently caressed the cheek, and brightened every eye. The stream danced along the valley with a gayer music than its wont; the golden leaves seemed laughing and chuckling privately to themselves; the small white clouds came slowly floating from the east and west with the veering wind, and pausing just above the home of hunter John, were plainly interested equally with stream, and leaf, and tree, in this the wedding-day of the valley's "darling!"

Noon was approaching when an echoing shout—flying and gamboling like a schoolboy on a holiday—came down the valley, and gave warning that the company were drawing on.

In five minutes the dell seemed alive with horsemen, who galloping as though a rushing flood grèater than ever broke through Holland dykes was at their heels, flew onward toward the house of hunter John. With hair streaming—caps waved madly over their heads—and heels dug violently into the sides of their flying coursers, they came more recklessly than ever yet the riders in any steeple-chase, toward the hill. For there awaited them old hunter John—a mighty, ribbon-ornamented bottle in his hand. Why need we add, those rushing roaring mountain youths were "running for the bottle!"

Among the foremost, mounted on his gallant sorrel, and thundering along with careless rein, and hand upon

his thigh, was Doctor Thomas. The doctor was clad with unusual elegance. He wore a laced velvet coat, a many-colored vest, and his silk stockings and white-topped boots were marvels of taste and richness. You hardly looked at the rider nevertheless—so fine a sight was the noble sorrel, with arched neck and glossy coat, flying onward to the merrymaking, as though he too knew the meaning of it all.

Behind the valiant doctor came a dozen other horsemen, all at full speed, with coats streaming, hats waved madly over head, and merry shouts; behind, for though the speed of the mountain horses was great, the sorrel kept before them all.

Suddenly, with a burst of jocund laughter all drew up, checking their foaming horses, and yielding in the contest. Doctor Thomas had reached the hill, sped up to the door, and received from hunter John the famous bottle. A shout greeted this performance, and the horsemen coming up, the victor was congratulated by all. He handed the bottle to a young mountaineer, on a swift black mare; and in a moment the young man was on his way back at full speed. Barry and the wedding party were to drink of "Black Bess"—so they called it—before they came on to the mansion.

By noon the guests had all arrived—among the rest father Von Horn, and Nina, and—to the profound astonishment of all—Mrs. Courtlandt! That lady was not clad, as Doctor Thomas had threatened, in her singular home costume of moccasins and coat, but in a plain dark dress, which set off well her calm and refined countenance. Hunter John expressed some consternation on her arrival—mounted on the little white pony all knew well—but soon this passed, and the merrymaking commenced. The bride, had not as yet made her appearance; but soon her door was thrown open, and the "darling" of the valley issued forth.

CHAPTER XIX.

HOW SHE WORE THE WHITE SILK AFTER ALL.

SALLY had never looked prettier than at this moment. She was clad in the famous silk, whose history the reader has heard at so much length, and it now appeared that Nina Lyttelton's counsel had carried the day—for the dress was low-necked. The rich silk undulating as she moved, fairly dazzled the eye—and had not Sally on that morning withdrawn herself solemnly from the list of mountain belles, we can not estimate the number of enemies she must have made. In her hair some white lingering autumn flowers clustered together, spreading around her as she came, a faint delight—and, not to elaborate what we feel to be a most poor and inadequate description, this young lady whom we have promoted to the post of heroine, in one word, so overcame all hearts—including of course those youths who would have died for her before—that many felt thereafter (for a month or two) that life had lost all charm for them; that all their happiness was merest shadow, existence but a dream, and that unhappy; the world no longer bright since she, the “darling” of all hearts had gone from them; “gone and got married,” as they said, and so was lost forever!

But unconscious of the many hearts she was breaking, the young girl came on, attended by her bridesmaids—and at her side walked Barry, proud and happy. Around him were gathered also the attentive groomsmen in their snowy aprons; and soon the ceremony was commenced and ended;—and Sally, blushing like a rose, received the

thousand gratulations, kisses, and wishes for her happiness, customary on such occasions.

When all had pledged the new-married pair in the contents of the great punch bowl, the broad table was drawn out, and those white-aproned gentlemen we have mentioned, hastened to the next room—temporarily the kitchen. Thence they filed in with the great hissing dishes, and having placed the profuse meal, as was their duty, on the board, they sat down with the rest, and the feast commenced.

CHAPTER XX.

HOW THEY ALL ROMFED MERRILY, AND WHO GOT THE SLIPPER.

IT was a hearty and cheerful sight to see old hunter John upon that merry day. He seemed to have returned to his boyhood once again, and when he took the head of the table, with his wife at the foot and Sally at his side, you should have seen him! He was clad like all his guests—Doctor Thomas only excepted—in the ornamented hunting shirt of the mountaineers, leggings, stockings, and high-buttoned vest; an enormous collar sawed his ears, confined by a narrow ribbon, bound around his broad muscular throat; and his iron-gray hair was gathered in a queue behind.

But no one saw his dress, or dreamed of the existence of the queue; the smile of joy and pride, illuminating gloriously the broad bright-eyed face, alone was visible; and when the hunter stood up with a mighty cup raised in his right hand and drank “to the young people’s happy times,” all the company rose as if on springs, and a shout broke from them which was heard far off upon the mountain side, and made the house vibrate with very joy, and wholly drowned the merrily-laughing fiddle which was perched in the corner, over the revelers’ heads, with standing orders never to stop a moment to take breath, but do its best to drown the clatter of plates, and silence every voice!

It was not long before the scramble for the slipper of the bride commenced. This new—or rather very old—mode of “hunting the slipper,” was simply to obtain by

stratagem or other means while she sat at table, the slipper of the bride, and he who succeeded in gaining possession of it spite of her struggles, and of the efforts of the groomsmen in her defense, was entitled to two kisses, and a bottle of wine—declared by long established and well-known usage his appropriate reward.

First, one of the young men would come behind her chair, and commence an indifferent conversation—then bend down to admire the new ring upon the fair hand of the bride; then suddenly the meaning of all this manœuvring would betray itself in a quick dart at the little shoe firmly fixed on the little foot beneath the table. But the shoe was not so easily captured—and most probably the adventurous wight was caught by the attentive groomsmen, and thrown staggering back; or worse still, a ringing sound was heard, and he retreated with tingling cheek from the offended bride. Every stratagem possible was used, every effort made to get possession of the slipper, and we may assert with perfect safety that the bottle of wine was not the prize so warmly struggled for by the young mountaineers. Sally was too honest and reasonable to dispute the right acquired by the fortunate person, and she made every exertion to preserve herself from the threatened kisses.

At last the struggle for a moment ceased; they were taking breath.

“Brave girl!” cried old father Von Horn who sat at her side, and had watched the romping with vast delight; “I know she’s a match for you all, boys! no kisses for you here! You will have to confine your embraces to your own sweethearts;” here the old man looked mischievously around on the young girls.

They all tossed their heads.

“Pshaw!” he cried, “you know I am joking, my daughters. But I was saying that this little shoe here was safe still, and in—how long is it, friend Myers—”

"In ten minutes it'll be out," said hunter John, looking at a Dutch clock over the mantle-piece. "The time will then be up, and we'll get to the dancing, girls."

"Oh, yes!" they all exclaimed, "let us have the dancing soon!"

"I love so much to dance!"

"I'm your partner, recollect!"

"No, you are not for the first reel!"

"What a merry fiddle!"

In the midst of this burst of talk, Sally turned to father Von Horn with a beseeching look.

The old man laughed significantly.

"Do you want any of these youngsters to get the shoe?" he said.

"Oh, no! father Von Horn," with great energy.

"Eh? not one?"

"Indeed I wouldn't let a single one touch it—if I could help it. But I can't! I don't think I can keep it on my foot," said the girl, laughing; "I thought that last pull of Doctor Thomas would certainly bring it off."

"Come now, is there no one here you have less objection to kiss?"

"I hate to think of kissing any."

"Why, what a cruel little chit!"

"Oh, father Von Horn!" said Sally, laughing, "to think that some one of these rough boys should take off Barry's kiss;" her voice sank at these last words and she blushed and smiled.

"To say nothing of the bottle of good old wine."

"Oh, any body may have that—there it is on the mantle-piece," she said; and then in the softest and most caressing tone of voice:

"Do you like Madeira wine, father Von Horn!" asked the little witch.

The old man laughed loudly.

"Why, yes!" said he, "but I'm afraid I shall get none

of it to-night, as you won't let any one take the slipper; a pretty little shoe it is," said the old man, glancing at the small foot, "the doctor there, says it's so small he can't grasp it with his hand!"

"Oh, he's a great flatterer, father Von Horn! But I didn't say I wouldn't let any one take my slipper, as you say—"

"What—!"

"Not in the least, father Von Horn," said the girl with a sly and confidential smile, "I said none of the boys! of course I wouldn't care if some nice old gentleman could—"

"Treason!" cried father Von Horn; "was the like ever seen! Come here, boys!"

"Oh, please don't betray me!" said Sally, beseechingly, "please, father Von Horn. They would laugh at me till I cried; and then you know," she said smiling, "there would be no dancing!"

"What are you talking about, father Von Horn?" the young men asked.

"Why, I wished to say to you, my young friends, that in five minutes the time for getting the slipper off is out—then good-by to the kisses and the wine."

The young men approached the bride carelessly.

"Oh! we have given it up."

"Wholly."

"It's no use."

"Miss Sally has got the fairies to work her a slipper and it is put on with a spell."

But these careless laughing words only masked a more violent attack than ever; and with such vigor and skill was the onset made that the young girl only kept her slipper on by the closest pressure of her foot. Suddenly, father Von Horn cried:

"The bottle, boys! the bottle! see to it!"

All heads were turned to the mantle-piece, thinking to

see it fall; when the merry old man stooped down, and with a quick jerk drew off the slipper and held it up in triumph!

“The slipper! the slipper!”

“Father Von Horn, indeed!”

“It ain’t fair!”

“I believe you let him take it, Miss Sally!”

“How can you say so!” she replied, laughing; “could I think of it while I was looking at the bottle?”

But spite of this ingenious defense, we are obliged to express our serious doubts of its sincerity. It was afterward stated that Miss Sally, when all eyes were turned away, had slyly bent back father Von Horn’s stalwart thumb; and that in obedience to the signal, the slipper had been seized.

However it may have been, one thing is certain, that the old man claimed the penalty; and the bottle gayly decked out with ribbons was handed to him. He filled the bride’s cup, then passed it round; so it was emptied. The rest of the penalty was more ceremoniously claimed by the fortunate possessor of the slipper.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE RECLAIMING OF THE SLIPPER.

THE party all rose from table, and the table itself was borne with the rapidity of magic from the room. Thus the floor was cleared for dancing; but first the ceremony we have alluded to was to be gone through with.

The company scattered back to the walls, where ranging themselves in close columns they looked on in silence. Then forth into the open space came father Von Horn, and with a profound bow, and a sign to the music, said:

“Here am I—where is the bride?”

“Here am I—I am the bride,” said the merry voice of the young girl, as she came into the open space, from the opposite side, with a slight irregularity in her gait—for the old man held gayly in his hand the captured shoe.

Father Von Horn bowed again.

“Is this the bride’s shoe? look at it well,” said he.

“I am the bride—the slipper is mine,” said Sally, blushing and laughing.

“I found the slipper—the little white slipper.”

“Do you wish a reward?”

“Yes.”

“What shall it be?”

“The slipper is pretty, and worth two kisses.”

“Kisses, sir?”

“Two of them!”

“Here are my lips.”

As they repeated these words, they slowly approached each other, and father Von Horn kneeling on one knee,

with the most profound respect, put the slipper upon the girl's foot, and then rising, placed his arms round her neck and kissed her twice, exciting thereby dreadful enmity among the young men against him.

At the same moment, the whole company commenced gayly singing,

“ Put your shoe on
To keep your foot warm,
And two little kisses will do you no harm.”

The fiddle changing its tone from the wild outrageous merriment which before characterized it, to a thoughtful and subdued measure, here glided in, so to speak, and interpreted the words. The whole was wound up with, “heigho ! heigho !” sung as a chorus, but these “heighos” were much more like laughter than sighing.

Then the fiddle, as if ashamed of falling into a fit of musing, and being absent in company, struck up a merry reel, and the bride, the groom, the whole joyful party commenced gayly dancing.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE DOCTOR REMINDS BARRY OF HIS ENGAGEMENT.

THE happy company took no thought of the rolling hours, but acting on the ancient and respectable maxim, that no time is like the present moment for enjoyment, entered into the dancing with a spirit, which for the time made them lose sight of every thing else in the world. It was part of their teaching—this wild abandonment to mirth and laughter. But a few years before, within the memory at least of many, the savage had often interrupted such sport with the yell of onset; and the recollections or the traditions of those former years still dwelt in the minds of all, and impressed upon them the importance of the moment for enjoyment.

Alone in the background, Doctor Thomas looked on with silent pleasure; his eyes following incessantly the forms of Barry and Sally and Nina as they ran through the dance. Barry was entirely happy, perhaps for the first time in his life, for his was a nature which demanded the extremes of emotion always; and now in the extreme happiness of his union with the young girl, he forgot all the sad days that had gone before and gave himself up to unreserved delight.

He left the room, just as the mountains and the sky were darkening, to commune with his own thoughts in silence and obscurity. The sound of an approaching foot-step interrupted him. He turned round.

"Ah, sir," said he, "you are here; I thought I was alone."

"Which means that my presence is an intrusion, eh?" said Doctor Thomas.

"The world is free, sir."

"Pardon me, that is a fallacy; but I came, sir, to arrange our little matters; you no doubt understand to what I allude."

Barry's face flushed.

"We are to fight then are we, sir?"

"Why certainly; you challenged me, I think."

"No sir—not challenged you," said Barry coldly, and repressing his agitation by a powerful effort, "you insulted a lady and I resented it."

"Well, well, words convey ideas; and I think you offered, on the occasion to which I allude, to fight me 'with any weapons.' Those were your very words, were they not?"

"And I am ready to hold to my words," said Barry, with an icy sensation at his heart.

Doctor Thomas threw a piercing glance upon the young man's agitated but resolute face—his pale but firm lips, his cheeks filled with blood, his large glowing eyes.

"Splendid diagnosis," he muttered with a smile. Then he said aloud:

"It is no child's play we are about, sir; this will be—should we fight—a matter of life and death."

"So be it!" said the young man.

"I am sorry."

"Be sorry on your own account, sir! you have not the satisfaction of feeling that you fight in a good cause. I have it!"

"How so?"

"You pretend not to understand me. Well, sir, that is your own business."

"I only understand that we must fight, and that you are just married."

Barry's lip curled with scorn.

"And for that reason you have pressed the matter now."

"Come, come—"

"I admire your great delicacy, sir."

There was so much scorn in these few words that one

might have very reasonably feared a personal encounter then and there. The doctor only smiled, and his smile was bright and unaffected.

"Why, we are enemies are we not?" he asked.

"Yes, sir; we are."

"Well, when you have an enemy what do you do?"

"Say what you have to say, sir."

"May the devil take me, you are crusty, my friend: it is not etiquette to reply to me in this way."

"I don't mean to use ceremony."

"It is, however, far more *comme il faut*—pardon my rudeness. In Paris, the centre of European refinement—so they say at least—a challenge necessitates courtesy, between the principals. You may kill, but you must kill with politeness and kindness."

To these coolly uttered words, Barry replied, with flashing eyes, "I do not take pattern from others, sir, when I am insulted!"

"Well, I was about to ask you, just at the moment you interrupted me, what your course toward an enemy would be under the present circumstances. I meant to say that my revival of our quarrel at this moment is not so heinous an offense against good breeding as you would make it. Granted I hate you, does it not follow that my proposal at this moment is the most rational, philosophical and consistent I could make? You are at the height of felicity—I would plunge you into the depths of despair, by saying to you, 'Come now and give me your life; you owe it to me!'"

Barry turned pale.

"I am ready," he said, with one hand on his heart.

"Pistols?"

"Any thing."

"Now? They are not far off."

Barry's head sank and his lip quivered. Oh! to abandon so much happiness just as he had grasped it—to yield up the prize just when it was his own! to die just as he

had commenced a long life of unalloyed delight, with that dear heart to drive away all sorrow, and light up his days with never failing joy! It was a hard trial, and the stranger watched him with close attention; he saw the head droop, the lip quiver. But the next moment Barry's head rose, and his large haughty eye flashed fire.

"Now!" he said, resolutely, "yes, sir; you have the right to order all! Let it be now!"

The doctor received this reply with an expression impossible to describe; but he gazed upon the young man with the deepest tenderness—the most unmistakable admiration.

Then advancing a step toward him:

"Sir," he said with dignity, and in a voice from which every trace of its usual mocking sarcasm had disappeared, "I ask of you pardon for the unworthy words I have uttered now and at our former interview, and hope you will forgive me for what I have both said and done. I can not offer you an apology for the insult to your bride, for I am guilty of uttering no such words, of offering no such insult. You do not know me," here a brilliant smile lit up the martial and attractive features of the stranger, "or you never would have believed me guilty of such an act."

Bowing to Barry, he turned away and bent his steps toward the mansion, leaving the young man in such profound astonishment, that he was wholly incapable of returning the stranger's courtly inclination. That astonishment was far from disagreeable, however: this thing of nursing a quarrel which had cooled, into its primitive violence, and deliberately taking a man's life or losing his own for it, was repugnant to every principle of the mountaineers. At the risk then of lowering our hero in the reader's estimation, we must confess he was delighted.

Suddenly a loud shout from the house attracted his attention, and he hastened in.

CHAPTER XXIII.

HOW DOCTOR THOMAS EXHIBITED GREAT DELIGHT AT NINA'S SAYING "NO."

THE cause of the outcry was very simple. Some of the young men had provided themselves with an enormous pumpkin, which, having hollowed it out, they carved into the form of a terrible and threatening face, with goggle eyes, frowning brow, and huge ogre teeth. They had then fixed candles in the eyes, and raising it on a stick, suddenly presented it at the window; at the same moment, a young gentleman renowned for his excellence in the department of animal-mimicry had uttered a terrific roar.

The consequence of this manœuvre was first the shrieks we have mentioned—then sundry fits of hysterics, some fainting fits indeed. The first in point of suddenness and violence was Mrs. Nina Lyttelton who seeing a wicker couch convenient, and catching a glimpse of the doctor, had fallen with a truth of representation and a grace of attitude worthy of the highest admiration.

The doctor bending over her, applied the usual restoratives with his usual ironical courtesy, and subdued chuckle: but it might have been observed that his manner had much changed toward the fair Nina.

At last she opened her eyes.

"Is that you?" she said smiling, languidly.

"Yes," said he, very rationally.

"Oh, I was so frightened!"

"Those wicked boys!"

"What was it?"

"Why, nothing but a large pumpkin which they had fixed with lights. How could you faint at that."

"Oh, it scared me so."

"And your fright was pretty, on my faith. You faint charmingly, Nina," said the doctor in a low tone, almost whispering.

The lady laughed.

"Doctor Thomas is very flattering," she said with a gay emphasis on the two first words of the sentence.

"He will break himself of that bad habit perhaps when—"

"You stop; why don't you finish your speech."

"When he is united—no, I mean when he is "the happiest of men;" that is a prettier phrase."

"Impudent!"

"Who—I?"

"Yes."

"How am I, pray?"

"To presume to speak of our marriage as all settled."

And she gave him a fascinating smile.

"Why, is it not?"

"No."

"Good! I thought so, I knew I couldn't be mistaken. As usual your *no* means *yes*."

"You are unbearable."

"What a charming pout you have, Nina! I now see for the first time how much you have gained in beauty."

"And you are much deteriorated."

The doctor curled his mustache, with a flattered air.

"Well, when shall it be?" he said.

"What?"

"Our wedding-day, of course!"

"I won't marry you ever."

"Say on Christmas eve, darling."

"No! no! no!"

"I am the happiest of men!" exclaimed the doctor, kissing her hand with an expression of deep delight.

CHAPTER XXIV.

HOW FATHER VON HORN DRANK TO THE GOOD HEALTH OF THE
ABSENT AND WHAT ENSUED.

THE happiest days must come to an end, the merriest hours go onward to the shadowy tomb of the future, though the gayest music strive to rouse them from their biers. The splendid October day had gone across the hills and far away, and was no more a thing of being, real life to "Meadow Valley;" only a memory, long time very sweet and pleasant to all the dwellers in those borders. The night darkened and darkened, and at last the hour approached when the merry company must say good-by, and once more seek their homes. In other words the big Dutch clock struck twelve.

Mrs. Courtlandt, whom we have scarcely noticed, chiefly because she kept herself so quiet in a corner with some middle aged gossips of her acquaintance, rose to go.

"Well, Mrs. Courtlandt," said hunter John, "you ain't going yet? The parting cup's yet to be drunk you know, and the supper ate; the boys are now in the other room fixing it."

Mrs. Courtlandt, with a pleasant smile and a polite word, readily consented to wait. "She was no spoilsport, and if she tried to break up the party now, they would go home and abuse her so badly that she would be persecuted for a witch, which some now thought her!"

At this hunter John laughed; but was interrupted in his reply by the throwing open of the middle door, whence the large table entered, loaded with the mighty supper. Huge roasts hissed and smoked—broils, stews,

hashes sent forth their appetizing odor, and large crumbling potatoes rose in pyramids, until they looked down proudly on the very rum-jugs, tall and portly which stood flanking all.

The supper was done full justice to, and again we must call attention to the fact, that the young ladies were by no means backward in their demeanor at the table. From noon to midnight dancing all the while, and with none of those intermediate meals which enable the fair damsels of our day to exhibit at the table such a birdlike slenderness of appetite—certes they must have been most honestly hungry! At least they seemed to be; and so the meal passed with a mighty clatter; not alone of knives and forks, be it observed—but also of cups and quickly emptied flagons.

At last a silence of expectation succeeded all this noise and bustle; the toasts were now to come; what in our day we call the “regular toasts.”

First, by hunter John—“Health, happiness, and salvation to fellow men all the world over,” which was drunk with much pleasure, and a great deal of honesty and sincerity.

Next by the Rev. gentleman who had united the pair, and who buried in a corner, talking theological dogmas, has not once crossed our vision—“Health to the new-married ones; the Lord guide and strengthen and preserve them, and make them his own. Amen.” This was considered a little too much like “asking a blessing,” and they hesitated between drinking and using their lips for the purpose of saying amen: but the worthy clergyman settled their doubts by draining his glass, and smiling as none but the old fox-hunting parsons of past days ventured to do. So the toast was duly honored with “healths,” many fathoms deep, even with shouts.

Then father Von Horn passing his hand across his brow, to dispel what seemed to be a cloud before his

eyes, drank "To the absent—every where—over-seas or elsewhere. May they all come back!" and he glanced mournfully at Mrs. Courtlandt. That lady was smiling.

"Father Von Horn will tell you a story, girls," she said, "and whom he means by the 'absent over seas.'"

The old man hesitated, but obeying a sign from Mrs. Courtlandt:

"I don't know, children," he said thoughtfully, "what makes me so mindful of this now; but as sister Courtlandt has promised you a story I will tell you one."

"A story?" said Doctor Thomas, "well, sir, we will listen. Be sure to begin at the beginning."

Father Von Horn smiled.

"Once upon a time," he said musingly, "there was a foolish old man who had two nephews: these youths were the sons of his sister, and as she and her husband both died in their childhood, he took them to his home as was but proper and right."

"He was a true and kind man, sir," said Doctor Thomas, in a low voice.

"One of the nephews," continued father Von Horn, "was willful and wild—God forbid I should speak harshly of him now, but he was the cause of much heaviness of heart to the old man, who was not so old either—"

"Well, sir—"

"He was a pretty boy," said the old man, smiling and gently beating his open hand with Sally's, "and I think I see him now just as he went away, with long curly hair and merry mischievous face—"

"He went away, did he?" murmured Doctor Thomas, stooping to touch his lips to a goblet of water.

"Yes; I was the old man and he was my nephew; and one day we had an altercation on some trifling matter—I was hasty and he left me."

"He ran away?" said Doctor Thomas, with a tremor in his voice.

"Yes."

"And did he never return?"

"Never," said father Von Horn, sadly and thoughtfully.

"Where is he now?"

"In Europe—Paris they say, studying at the great free colleges."

"You never heard from him, then?" said Doctor Thomas, starting.

"Yes, long ago: and we wrote to him, Barry and all."

"He never got your letters!"

"Why, what do you know of him?"

"What would you give to see him?" asked the doctor, disregarding the old man's question, and trembling.

"Much," said father Von Horn briefly, and looking at his interlocutor with astonishment.

"And you, Barry Courtlandt, what would you give to see your brother?—you, Mrs. Courtlandt to see your nephew?"

"I would be as happy as I could be in this world," said Barry, "but I am afraid," he added with mournful gravity, "that brother Max will never come back again."

Doctor Thomas dashed down his cup and rose with radiant countenance, and eyes that seemed to fairly flash lightnings of joy. His form appeared to dilate, his stature to increase, and pushing back his chair, he came with one bound to Barry who had risen struck with astonishment, and mastered by a vague excitement.

"You are wrong, Barry!" cried Doctor Thomas, catching the young man in his arms, "you are wrong! I am here now—that brother Max! You didn't know me! and you, uncle, you were drinking to the health of your bad nephew! Oh, he has changed, and I hope for the better!"

The doctor ran on with a perfect river of exclamations, and it was difficult to say whether he did not make more

noise than all the crowd together. The tears gushed from his eyes, he embraced the old German, hunter John, Sally, Nina and as many young ladies as came in his way—to their profound consternation; and declared to every one that this was the happiest day of his life: that foolish doctor Thomas Maximilian Courtlandt!

Then seizing a huge goblet, or rather flagon, foaming with its ruby contents, he raised it high above his head, and drawing to him Barry and Sally with his left arm, drank to their health, and called on all to do as much once more!

And as much was done! a fair cup was emptied joyously by all, and in the middle of the bustle and uproar and merrily-sounding shouts, the fiddle perched upon the eminence above, took suddenly his rightful part in the rejoicing, and bursting into a roar of laughter, soon out-talked them all, and reigned with undisputed sway!

Doctor Thomas, with his head bent down and his arms around Barry and Sally, who were crying, could only sob and laugh—that cynical, sarcastic Doctor Thomas!

CHAPTER XXV.

TEARS AND LAUGHTER.

It will not be necessary for us to describe the rapture of father Von Horn and Barry, and Sally, and indeed every one, at the return of Max Courtlandt so long lost and now come back to them, healthy vigorous and joyful. As for Nina she had been let into the momentous secret some time before, as the reader may imagine. But father Von Horn and the rest were thunderstruck. That the wild young Max should return the elegant cavalier, the calm and self-poised man they saw before them: that he could have so changed as not to be recognizable by those who had loved him and lamented him so long, was most marvelous. But there at least he was! The mystery was over. Dr. Thomas was the merry Maximilian Courtlandt of old days.

The old man shed tears of joy: he had never ceased to hold the young man's image in his memory and heart, from that melancholy hour when bending down he had wept upon his passionate letter, after their quarrel. He had never ceased to lament the unhappy event which drove the boy from his house—though he was not to blame, his neighbors had said a thousand times.

But now all regret and sorrow were over and gone; the Prodigal Son had returned; and joy had come to his heart once more. Barry wept in silence.

The company at length broke up, and with a thousand expressions of good-will to the doctor, took their leave; with many merry compliments to the married pair also.

The clatter of hoofs, the rattling wheels of vehicles, the merry shouts, soon died away. Silence reigned once more on the mountain side, and Max—now Doctor Max—related in a few words, the outline of his adventures after leaving Martinsburg.

He had gone to the seaboard, intent on leaving Virginia at least; with no idea, however, of his future mode of life, or with any scheme whatever. He had finally gone on board a schooner at Alexandria, which he was told, would sail for Philadelphia. The schooner in reality was outward bound, and only touched land again at the mouth of the Seine. He had gone to Paris—had determined to make himself a physician—had entered at one of the great free colleges—had lived precariously—had gained a prize—been assisted by one of the most eminent savans of the time—had written much for the journals of medicine—had gone to London and written more—had finally become dreadfully home-sick, and here he was!

This was the outline of his life and adventures, which the young man, with rapid and picturesque utterance, traced for his attentive and most loving auditors. They hung upon his words—surrounded him with loving glances full of joy and sympathy—and when he had finished, and his last feeling words died away in the midnight, all were on the verge of tears—tears of the purest joy.

“Well, God bless us,” said father Von Horn, “it has been a long weary time you have been away, my boy. My heart was very sore at your going away from us—my fault—all my fault—”

“Dear uncle—”

“Don’t say me nay: I never should have chid you so rudely. You were not a child, and had no cool, aged blood in your veins. But all that is gone!”

“To think it!” said hunter John, “that this fine Doctor I have been talking to so much of late, was nobody

but wild Max, after all. I'm most nigh unbelieving yet—in spite of what he says."

Nina laughed.

"Are you as bad as ever, Max?" she said, "is every thing as much a jest as ever with you."

"As much as ever," he replied, "no, one thing is not. That is earnest."

At which speech Mrs. Nina was observed to blush—which was remembered afterward.

"How long it seems since you and Sally acted *Romeo and Juliet!* brother," said Barry in his soft earnest voice. "It seems years to me."

"When you first displayed your chivalric devotion to this young lady here. Do you remember, *mon garçon?*"

"Oh, perfectly," said Barry, laughing.

"And you, my Juliet?"

"Yes—oh, yes," said Sally, blushing, "how could I forget it?"

"True; let's see, what says Romeo?"

And with solemn intonation he repeated:

"He told me Paris should have married Juliet;
Said he not so? or did I dream it so?
Or am I mad, hearing him talk of Juliet,
To think it *was* so?"

Sally blushed again.

"Paris on that occasion resuscitated," said the doctor, "but did not marry Juliet. Barry is a tolerable substitute, however, Sally."

"What a joker you still are, Max," Nina said.

"Yes, yes. I shall never get to accustom myself to the professional air—solemn and wise; but my folly never wounds. You are not angry now, are you, Sally?"

"Oh, no."

"Well come give me an affectionate kiss. I'm *brother* Max now. After which I may say:

"Thou knowest my lodging: get me ink and paper,
And hire post horses; I will hence to-night."

To Mrs. Courtlandt's, I mean. That lady knew what was coming, and having heard my adventures already, very naturally accompanied homeward a party who went by her dwelling."

The kiss was very tremulously, but willingly and lovingly granted to her new brother by the young girl; and then he and father Von Horn and all took their leave—the Doctor riding very gallantly by Nina's side, until they reached their mountain home.

Spite of the pressing invitation to remain, the Doctor returned homeward, lost in thought: he could not explain to his own satisfaction why he had not taken advantage of the invitation, but determined to pay a visit to Nina on the next day. Consoling himself with this resolution, he went quietly along, and soon reached Mrs. Courtlandt's.

On the next day he paid the visit he had determined on: and on that very day he asked Nina a most tender question. We know not what the reply was in exact words; but Doctor Courtlandt went home overwhelmed with joy—that fierce, sarcastic Doctor Thomas.

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CHAPTER XXVI.

A MERRY CHRISTMAS.

THE merry yule-tide came with jest and laughter and abundant cheer; and joyful gatherings of how many friends; and earnest blessings on the absent loved; and charity toward all men, every where. Most merry was it there in Meadow Branch Valley with roaring logs, and great foaming bowls, and roasted turkeys, such as never yet walked through the dreams of epicures, and all gay adjuncts of the festal season.

"Festival" was very "high" in every house—even at Mrs. Courtlandt's that good Catholic, who never betrayed her connection with the church, but on such festive days. The days were bright; the snow was covered over with a mantle of sunlight; the frost upon the window panes reared its grand fairy palaces for merry children. Mirth and gay-hearted laughter reigned undisputed, and every where Saint Nick came visiting with most capacious valises, holding fabulous amounts of good things.

Christmas was kept with great joy and heartiness, at father Von Horn's and hunter John's. And here we will record an historical fact of some interest. Father Von Horn first introduced the *Christmas Tree*, a German custom, now so universal in our land. Upon his hospitable board was raised for the first time in Virginia that evergreen pine which now is every where the emblem of the season—which rains on children's heads such magical fruit; which has wholly routed and put to flight the old English "Christmas-box." Saint Nick for the first time deviated from his route and came to Meadow Branch, and hung his presents on the fairy pine.

But where are we wandering? Shall we describe those Christmases, and bring our musty historic disquisitions as a sauce to our description? Why should we attempt to catch some of the aroma of the jubilant festival, when the whole record lies untranslatable on every heart-tablet? Is it not all written in the Book of the Chronicles of Christmas kept safely in those loving memories?

But we must not pass by one circumstance which made the merry yule-tide merrier, in Meadow Branch. This was the marriage of Nina with the gentleman whose name has appeared so often in this history; Mr.—now Doctor—Maximilian Courtlandt. That happy event came in due time, and father Von Horn's measure of joy was full. The old man now was satisfied; he could die in peace he said, with Max to take care of his dear daughter; and should we never again in this brief history recognize that cheerful face, or listen to that hearty loving voice, we may at least be sure that that true loyal soul, was now once more most happy.

Max was again the son indeed of his fond uncle; and Nina gave her whole heart to him—Nina so merry but so earnest in her tender love; so changeable but ah! so close-bound now with golden chains by her true love; her love for that much-wept companion of her youth: lost to them all so long, her own at last.

PART III.

ON THE SLEEPY CREEK MOUNTAIN.

CHAPTER I.

THE TWO STRANGERS.

ON a bright afternoon in the month of October, nearly twenty years after the events we have just related, two men got out of the cars at Martinsburg. The cars! this single word will convey to the reader more completely than a volume of description, the new scenes he is now about to be introduced to. He has witnessed—if indeed, he has followed us through the incidents of our brief chronicle—the peculiar modes of life of the past in the then border town: he has been present at a veritable “running for the bottle,” he has found in the strongest intellects, those traits of credulity and superstition which advancing civilization, with its ever increasing radiance, puts to rout.

The new age had inaugurated itself with literature for its pass word, science for its battle-cry. Steam had revolutionized the past: newspapers and journals were showered down like a beneficent rain from heaven, on the long parched earth: the land every where glowed and bloomed with the new light and heat infused into its veins; in one word (type of this great change), the cars had come, arousing with their shrill scream, the long dormant echoes of the quiet country side.

The two travelers we have mentioned, came from the east; and standing on the platform of the dépôt now gazed quietly at the long train as it sped on toward the west.

The first was a man of about forty, manly and pleasing in face, form, and carriage. A dark auburn beard very full but carefully trimmed, covered his cheeks and joined his short hair of the same color. A high forehead, piercing eyes, and firm lips gave to his countenance great force and elegance; but a buoyant, well-pleased smile removed all traces of student-character from this face, so suggestive of reflection and profound mental toil. Thought had paled the forehead, and closed the firm lips; but health had made the thinker cheerful and full of life.

His companion was a contrast to himself, in every particular. In the first place he was young: apparently not more than eighteen or nineteen, and his figure had none of that well-knit strength and activity in every movement, which that of the elder possessed. His hair long and very fair, fell around a face almost feminine in its delicacy; blue eyes, thoughtful, and veiled by heavy lashes, completed the contrast; for those eyes, like the whole face, were full of sadness and quiet melancholy. The cheerful manly countenance of the elder, attracted and invited all who approached its possessor: the dreamy and retiring thoughtfulness of the young man's face repelled. But one idea seemed to possess his mind, to the exclusion of all other objects and reflections. Now to be an agreeable person in society, above all to be "popular," it is absolutely necessary to have more than one idea.

They were both clad in the ordinary manner of gentlemen at the period—the young man somewhat more elegantly than the elder, whose form was enveloped in a brown surtout with frogged buttons.

While the young man was calmly looking round him, his companion with all the presence of mind of an old traveler, was attending to his baggage, which consisted of a pile of enormous trunks, bound heavily with iron bands, such as are made use of by those who travel on the sea. Nothing was missing, and soon two or three bus-

ting porters were busy in removing them, to the "Globe." The Globe was now a *hotel* and had its *porters*.

"Come, Max," said the elder traveler, cheerfully, "let us get on. I am hungry, which is no doubt owing to the fact that I have had no dinner."

"So am I, sir," said the young man, "I had very little breakfast."

"Eat heartily! eat heartily! it is a good rule, if not carried too far. You are thin, I think, and don't look well."

The young man sighed.

"I am very well though, sir," he said.

"How are the spirits?"

"Excellent, sir," said the young man, with a sad smile.

His companion shook his head; and looking at the young man with great tenderness, sighed. Then taking his arm, the traveler led the way on foot toward the hotel.

Every thing in Martinsburg had changed; the old things had passed away, and all had become new. New blood was in her veins, her streets were bustling; stores gayly decked with rich carpets, and all descriptions of bright-colored stuffs to attract the passer by, stood now where once low dingy dwellings crouched, apathetic and poverty stricken. The streets were thronged with wayfarers; the bright October afternoon had, moreover, brought forth the fairer portion of the community, and the warm pleasant sunlight poured its joyful splendor upon throngs of young girls and children, clad in a myriad rainbow colors, and gamboling like variegated tulip blossoms, shaken together by some merry summer's wind.

"Pretty," said the elder traveler, "are they not, Max?"

"Yes, sir; I am fond of them."

"Of what? The girls?"

"No, sir," Max said, smiling gently, "of children."

"Who is not? The man who dislikes them is worse than the music-hater: and you know Shakspeare says such are not to 'be trusted.' Children—well behaved

ones—and flowers, and poetry, and music, are among the purest and most innocent recreations we have, my boy. They are all recreations—when they are good!”

“I can’t bear some music, sir.”

“How so?”

“It affects me too much; I mean, makes me nervous.”

“Nervous?”

“The association is so strong,” murmured the young man, bending down his head.

His companion looked at him a second time with that tender yet piercing glance we have described, but made no reply.

“I know this is wrong, sir; but I can not help it,” the young man added, “I am too weak.”

“In God’s name my child,” said the elder, “banish this haunting memory. It is too exaggerated, too unreasonable; have I no cause like yourself? Come, come! let us dismiss the subject of music which afflicts you so: though every thing you touch is food for your irrational melancholy. Here we are at the Globe—my good old Globe.”

And smiling cheerfully, he entered.

CHAPTER II.

IMAGES AND VOICES OF THE PAST.

At supper, the elder of the two travelers seemed much preoccupied ; and this profound thought in one usually so joyous and full of entertaining talk, excited the young man's surprise. The traveler apparently heard nothing of the conversation of those around him ; the bustle, the clatter, the thousand noises of a hotel meal, made no impression on him, on his ears or mind. Sunk in a smiling, wistful reverie, his eyes bent on the walls of the large apartment, he seemed to have lost the consciousness of any outer world, living for the moment in that brighter universe—his memory.

At last he roused himself and looking round, saw the young man's eyes fixed inquiringly on him.

" Ah ! " he said, smiling, " you have caught me in a reverie, my boy ; and I see from your eyes—I always judge from the eyes of people's thoughts—that you are curious to know what thoughts are chasing each other through my mind. Ah, I have made a plunge far back into the bright waters of the past, as some one says : and I am refreshed by my plunge ! Memory is a grand endowment, and one of our purest earthly enjoyments—though sometimes, it is true, very saddening."

" But your memories were not, sir, to judge from your smiling face."

" No, no ! you are right."

" Happy memories—happy memories—they must be a very great delight, sir," murmured the young man.

"It lies in a great degree with the individual, independent of the character of his past, to make them pleasant or sombre, Max," his companion said.

"How is that, sir?"

"I will tell you. You saw me just now, abstracted from all this bustle, dead to all this confusion of clattering cups, and plates, and more clattering conversation. I was thus abstracted because in this very room, long years ago, a scene took place which impresses me even now with all the force of reality. Now, from that scene I might have derived either bitter or pleasant thought. I had the election, and chose the pleasant. Did you not see me smiling?"

"Yes, sir; may I ask what was the scene you allude to?"

"Ah, one of the merry diversions of my youth. Enough! that is all gone—gone with my youth. To rake in the cold ashes for names and images and gayly-uttered words," the traveler said, sadly, a cloud passing across his fine forehead, "would be lost labor. Let them rest; I have had my moment's pleasant thought—I have heard again those joyous and heart-moving words—I have caught again the echoes of that merry laughter! Now let them die away for me; those beautiful forms may disappear, for they have performed their part. Come! let us go."

And the traveler rose from the table, and, followed by his young companion, left the room. Then leaving the young man, who complained of fatigue, he took his way down Queen Street, glancing thoughtfully around him.

Standing on the bridge, his eyes fixed upon a stone house which crowned the slope beyond, the traveler mused and sighed. Then, as if mastered by a sudden impulse, he ascended the slope, the setting sun lighting up radiantly his erect muscular form, and going to the door of this house, knocked at it. A servant appeared and informed the traveler that his master was absent; this seemed, however, to be scarcely a disappointment to the

visitor: and a piece of money slipped into the negro's hand speedily smoothed all obstacles to his entrance.

Standing in that fine apartment we have entered so often in past times, the stranger looked around him with his old thoughtful smile. There were the panels and wainscoting and cornice, all elaborately carved with flowers and birds and satyr-faces, those objects much affected by our noble ancestors; there were the large andirons with Minerva's head still stately on their tops; there was the very vine around the window; and—yes! for a wonder—the very harpsichord so well known in old days, and eloquent of mincing minuets and merry maidens!

The stranger's eyes grew dreamy; and absorbed, apparently, in other scenes and objects than those around him, he stood motionless there in that room, whose very atmosphere seemed to have steeped his senses in forgetfulness of the real world; arousing for him, however, all the long-dormant splendor, and gay utterances of the golden past. The stranger really thought he saw there before the harpsichord that stately form, upright and stiff, but full of tender charity and affection, with the silk net upon her deep black hair! And there upon her feet!—The stranger uttered a slight laugh, which died away in the dim sunset chamber. He really thought he heard that gliding minuet again roll to him, freighted with all the life and joy and freshness of his sparkling youth; he thought he saw that young fair form, a star, a moonbeam, something bright and rare, glide through the royal dance! Did he only *think* he saw that young fair form? Cold word to express the power of memory! There she was plainly, courtesying with the merry smile, and shaking her beautiful head at him till the curls rippled round her child-face like bright April clouds! There were the white jeweled hands, lost in the falling lace—yellow, in truth, as then was the fashion, but yellower by the contrast! There was the little slipper when she made the courtesy!

There plainly was, moreover, a young man who made most graceful bows, who ambled, sidled, nearly touched the floor when, pressing to his heart the hat with its broad streaming ribbon, he inclined profoundly to his fairy partner: there was that young man now again approaching that bright child; there he was plainly with his wicked smile—and in his hand!—there plainly!—

The stranger laughed aloud.

“Ah, what a dreamer I am becoming,” he said, “here I have been guilty of just what I have berated Max for; I have engaged in irrational melancholy musings about things and scenes gone into the far past—which might as well be gone into oblivion—‘What’s Hecuba to him or he to Hecuba?’ Come, come, I must not indulge this fit of musing any longer; the sun has set.”

And the stranger left the house.

CHAPTER III.

THE STRANGER FINDS THE YOUNG MAN WHERE HE HAD EXPECTED TO FIND HIM.

As he drew near the "Globe," again the stranger cast a mournful look down the long street leading to, or rather running through the former "German quarter," which, edged with tall golden-foliaged trees—autumn was coming fast—lost itself in the distance toward the western, sun-flushed mountain. He stopped a moment evidently hesitating whether he should bend his steps in that direction, and so exhaust his memories with an exploration of those long-loved and sorrowfully-remembered localities, as he had just done in the old house upon the hill.

Here, he reflected, was little food for merriment or laughter, such as he had but now indulged in at the freaks of his imagination in the old stone mansion yonder. Here was no provocation to laughter, rather tears; no gay recollections, only griefs. Why stir up those slowly dying sparks—why blow upon that brand, and thus with a breath, dispelling the white crumbling ashes, fan again into a burning coal that gradually expiring ember? It was well perhaps, to revisit again the scenes of joy and merriment—the spirit was refreshed by those bright and happy memories, which threw, even yet, some rays of the old splendor on the path now sterile, once so full of flowers and velvet-grasses. Would these other woeful memories in the same manner revive again the brightness of the past? No—much more all the sorrow of the past, the agony, the yearning, the fond tears. Why visit scenes, then, full of those influences? "No, no," the stranger

muttered, "I must go and comfort one who already feels too much of this."

And he entered the "Globe." The young man was not there; he had gone out, they said; and, upon diligent inquiry, the stranger discovered that the direction he had taken was toward the German quarter. The traveler sighed, and again putting on his hat, and drawing his surtout around him, took his way toward the place indicated.

A walk of ten minutes brought him in front of a large low dwelling, covering much ground, and overshadowed by two enormous oaks, reddened by the near approach of autumn. The house looked desolate and uninhabited; moss grew upon the stones before the door, and upon the low drooping eaves; the windows had more than one broken pane, and the heavy shutters turned slowly in the melancholy wind upon their rusty hinges.

The traveler's heavy-heeled boot rung on the flag stones, arousing mournful echoes in the old walls, now touched by the light of the rising moon. An old dog chained to the door-post rose suddenly as if to bay, but as suddenly commenced whining and wagging his tail. He had plainly recognized a friend or an acquaintance in the stranger, who caressed him mournfully, fearing almost to enter the house, though the door stood ajar, ready to yield to the slightest push.

The traveler entered and found himself, as he had feared, in the presence of the young man who, however, did not see him, so deeply was he moved, and so unconscious of all now around him. Seated in a broad leathern chair, his head lying on his arms, which were folded upon the ponderous table, he seemed a prey to the most agonizing grief. The moonlight streaming through the open window revealed to the stranger this mournful figure, motionless but for the suppressed agitation of the head with its long fair hair, silent but for the passionate sobs which from time to time shook the slight form, and forced their way through the trembling lips.

The traveler seemed much moved, and for a few moments stood looking at this sorrowful picture in silence. Then he laid his hand on the young man's shoulder and said, in a low tone,

“My child!”

The young man started with terror, and rose to his feet, shuddering, his face pale, his eyes full of tears, his lips agitated by a nervous tremor. Recognizing the stranger he fell again in his seat, pressing one hand on his heart.

“Oh!” he exclaimed, “you frightened me so, sir!”

“Frightened you, my child?”

“Yes, sir; I am nervous lately, and the time—this place—oh, I have been so wretched here!”

And covering his face with his hands, the young man burst into a passionate flood of tears.

The stranger standing calm and silent, looked at him, making no effort as yet to check these tears. He was too well acquainted with human nature and with physiology not to know that they would somewhat relieve the full heart and brain.

“Max,” he said, at length, “you have much distressed me by again yielding to these feelings. I had hoped that after my request, you would struggle against them, knowing as you do know how much your affliction afflicts me—”

“Oh, sir—how could I—”

“How could you help it? You were going to say that; were you not?”

“Yes, sir,” sobbed the young man.

“I will tell you. By following the advice I gave you; do you not remember that advice my child? First, to never seek occasions for such outbursts, and you have sought such an occasion to-night; never to listen to music which arouses memory; not to visit places which revive again all those saddening recollections which affect so powerfully your fragile constitution. I have more than once impressed upon you the importance of these things, and I am grieved to find that you have so

little confidence in my judgment ; I will not say, pay so little attention to my wishes, for I know you love me."

"Oh, indeed I do, sir," cried the young man, "God is my witness!"

"Why then, have you caused me so much distress? You know you are not well—you are as delicate as possible, though not, strictly speaking, unhealthy, since proper care will in a short time establish your health firmly; and now, with all this delicacy of temperament and constitution, ready to be turned into disease, or into robust strength, you come to this melancholy place, where every breath of air you draw is poison, where you feel the oppressive sense of a death," the stranger by a powerful effort commanded his agitated voice, and spoke with firmness, "you come here and I find you—in what state? Why, God preserve me! so unmanned that you start and shudder at my entrance, and sink down with your hand upon your heart—a bad sign, very bad—saying you are frightened! unnerved!"

"I was terrified, sir," groaned the young man; "I have done wrong in coming."

"Why—why did you come, my child?" said the stranger, gazing with profound love on the pale, wan face.

"I could not help it, sir," murmured the young man. "My feet moved here against my will; I could not resist the influence which brought me. I was drawn both ways—by the recollection of your commands, and my feelings. My brain was heated, my heart cold. What could I do? I hardly saw where I was going, through the mist before my eyes—and the first thing I was conscious of was Bugle's jumping up and licking my hand. I found the door unlatched and no one was here, and so I sat down and was thinking—and got nervous—and when you came in I thought it was!—I always was superstitious!—I was—"

The young man stopped, powerfully agitated, and wiped his eyes. The stranger took his hand tenderly.

"Enough, Max," he said, "come, we will leave this place, for you are really unwell. Come, come! my child, you must never leave me again—I have but you."

At the same moment a noise was heard on the steps at the back of the house, and a stick hastily clashing on the floor as the walker approached, seemed to indicate age. An old negro woman, bent down with years entered, crying in the cracked voice of extreme age: "Who's there? who's there? who's in the house?"

"I and Max, aunt Jenny," said the stranger, taking her hand, "we have come back."

The old woman stood in great amazement for a moment, her thin form lit up by the weird moonlight, then burst into a flood of joyful exclamations which she interspersed with tears.

"Massa Max come back 'gin; glory! The ole woman's eyes is rejoice once more a-seein' of him: same face, same eyes! and young massa Max—he's a handsome chile, the Lord help me! and growed so tall, and look so han'some! He's a han'some one, the Lord help me! every body always say he was a han'some chile! young missis eyes agin for all the world! How tall he is done growed! I 'blige to look up when I'm a speakin' to him; he's a han'some chile, yes he is. I always said he was a pretty chile; and like his mother. A settin' one day with him on my knee—he was playin' with his little brass candlestick, you know, Massa Max, with the red flannel rag aroun' it—and his mother—a blessed saint in the glory of the Lord, my massa—says his mother, 'what a pretty chile he is, mammy,' a lookin' so beautiful and so lovin' at the boy; and says I, 'you right Miss Neeny, and he's jest like you—for all the world.' That made her laugh, you know, Massa Max, and she say, 'no, no,' and she tooked him and chucked him up, and he laughed too—this very blessed young massa, now growed so tall, yes! And he was a good chile—mighty han'some—'chuck,

chuck !' sez she, and he laughed, Massa Max—so you did, young Massa Max—you laughed ; and when she ask you if you was much lovin' of her, and if you wasn't so much more han'somer than she was, you stop laughin' and nod your head jest so and say 'um ! um !'—the Lord take me to glory ! for all the worl' like you knowed what she was a sayin'. Well he's a-growed so tall and han'some—and the ole woman is goin' mighty fast—she nussed him—he was a good chile—so was you, my massa," addressing the stranger, "but you was frolick-somer, and mighty bad ! for I nussed you too—yes I did ! Well the old woman's a-goin', but the blessed Lord done let her see her massa once agin ! Massa come to take care of his own agin, I spose. Hard times when he ain't here : is you got a little change for the ole woman for to buy sugar and coffee ? Mighty hard times ! well the Lord 'sarve you, Massa Max, and bless you ! and my pretty child done give the old woman somethin', too ! I 'blige to pay 'that lazy good-for-nothin' Jake, who stays 'long with me here. He's growed so han'some ! Yes he laugh and say 'um ! um !' and then he was soon a-playin' on the carpet. Missus is gone to glory—the Lord do so to me also. She never see the pretty chile since he growed so tall ! But he look sorry, mighty sorry," muttered the old woman, wistfully ; "why he's cryin'."

"Come, my child," said the agitated stranger, "too much of this. Aunt Jenny, I have come back for good, and don't fear not being taken care of : I never desert my friends—I will come soon again—very soon. See that all is closed after us."

And taking the weeping young man by the arm, the stranger led him from the house, himself silent and gloomy. The effect of this last scene upon the young man had shocked him profoundly—he began to have something more than vague presentiments of evil.

On the next morning the stranger sallied forth at an

early hour, intent on procuring two horses. These he found without difficulty, no further off than the stables of the Globe itself: and they were soon ready for the journey, which the stranger seemed to have determined on for himself and his younger companion.

The young man came out, pale and worn with weeping, and slowly mounted. The stranger threw upon him his habitual look, piercing but tender, and then with one vigorous movement got into his saddle.

"My baggage and my son's," he said to the landlord, "can remain I suppose, until I send for it. My name is upon it—Doctor Maximilian Courtlandt."

And with these words the stranger set forward toward the west in the bright sunlight, followed by his son.

CHAPTER IV.

THE LOCK, AND WHO AWAITED THE TRAVELERS THERE.

THE horses of the travelers were fine and spirited, and they made such good speed that a little after noon, the north mountain having been crossed some time before, they came in sight of "The Lock"—so father Von Horn, now gathered to his fathers, had named his mountain farm, because the Sleepy Creek and Third Hill mountain "locked" there. The travelers ascended the steep road, and soon drew up before the door of the mansion. It was one of those broad, wandering, stone-built houses which the original German population of the region scattered throughout the Virginia valley; wholly for use, somewhat for defense against Indians, scarcely in any particular constructed with an eye to ornament. The porch in front was large, the windows small and well secured by heavy oaken shutters, and those of the second floor looked out immediately from beneath the eaves.

A servant ran to take their horses, overwhelmed, it seemed, with joy to see his master come back to the old house, and at the door Doctor Courtlandt was received by no less a personage than Mrs. Courtlandt, the severe, the stately "Aunt Courtlandt" of his youth. The gray-haired old lady received her nephew with extreme delight, clasping him in her arms and affectionately kissing him with a thousand inquiries after his health and spirits—which latter subject elderly ladies usually place much stress upon—then she turned and welcomed the young man with equal pleasure and affection.

Doctor Courtlandt and his son had been absent for a

long time ; in fact they had left Virginia soon after Mrs. Nina Courtlandt's death, which had taken place some years before. The chief reason for this expatriation on the part of Doctor Courtlandt and his son, will appear in the course of our narrative. The old lady had willingly acceded to her nephew's desire that she should keep his house from rusting in his absence ; and the doctor now felt that he had gained more than he had expected. Long tossed about among strangers—unknowing and unsympathizing—the affectionate welcome of his aunt was very pleasant to him. True, that stout heart was sufficient in all things for itself, but this was far more pleasant than the respectful greeting of the servants only.

The old lady, having cried over Max, and given him several very affectionate kisses and embraces which he returned as affectionately, busied herself about their dinner.

"I got your letter from New York, nephew," she said, "saying that you had returned, but I did not expect you so soon."

"And have you not been troubled very much, aunt, with my affairs ? I thank you a thousand times."

"They have troubled me somewhat, especially that overseer you left. He almost insisted upon following his own crop system instead of mine ; now you know I have always been a capital farmer, and I would not yield. The consequence has been one-fourth more in the crop."

The doctor laughed.

"I never should have stood out half an hour against you," he said.

"Your dinner will soon be ready."

"Are you hungry, Max ?" asked the doctor, "I think you look better after your ride."

"I do feel better, sir," the young man said, sadly.

Mrs. Courtlandt, standing behind him, shook her head at the doctor ; who sighed wearily. Then he roused himself and assuming a gay tone, said :

"Oh, you'll be as strong as an ox here in the mountains, soon, my boy: what news, aunt? you wrote me very lately that Barry and all were well. How singular for Barry to turn minister. Does he preach regularly?"

"Yes; and they are all well. Alice and Caroline are much improved; they are thought very pretty."

"Why, they were children when we went to Europe."

"But you have been gone a long time—a very long time, nephew."

"And is hunter John well?"

"Not so well; he is very old, you know. We are all getting old—passing away."

"Why, my dear aunt, you are younger than you were ten years ago. Is she not, Max? Come, pay a compliment."

Max smiled.

"You know I always thought aunt was young-looking, sir," he said.

"Well done, *ma foi!* aunt, you will find my boy very much improved—an excellent scholar and an elegant cavalier. It will be a pleasure to have him about you."

"Max and myself were always great friends," said Mrs. Courtlandt, "and now dinner is ready."

"I confess I am hungry," said Doctor Courtlandt; "come, Max."

Max took scarcely any thing; the consequence was, the doctor, spite of his manful declaration of hunger, could swallow nothing. It was plain that all this gay bantering was a mask which concealed some painful emotion. They rose from the table and went out upon the porch, where the pleasant October sun made the red forest blaze. Far off, between the two mountains, stretched Meadow Branch Valley, dotted now by more than one white dwelling, from whose distant chimney light smoke wreaths curled upward against the thick foliage. On the slope of the eastern mountain, "Hunter John's," cottage was plainly visible.

"How!" cried the doctor, taking a seat in one of the wicker chairs upon the portico, "is not there some change down there, aunt?"

"What, nephew?"

"In hunter John's house."

"It is newly plastered."

"Possible?"

"I think it an improvement."

"Oh, certainly; but he is such an old-fashioned character, such a stickler too, for things of the olden time."

"True; he is. You must ask him, however, why he has altered his house. You know, Mrs. Myers died some years ago."

"Yes, yes; just after I went away. You mentioned it. And Barry and dear Sally live with the old man."

"He is very proud of having a real minister in the house."

"Oh, I must go at once and see them! I can not rest. Come, Max, my boy; again *en route*."

The young man rose listlessly.

At the same moment, the hoof-strokes of a galloping horse were heard, and a negro mounted on a powerful black horse, from whose back it seemed no time had been permitted him to remove the wagon harness, approached the Lock at full speed. The main road over the mountain led by the door.

"Ho! my friend," cried the doctor, "why all this hurry, pray?"

"Miss'is sick, sir."

"Who is your mistress?"

"Miss Emberton, sir."

"What! at the Glades?"

"Yes, sir—I must go on into town for the doctor."

"I am a doctor. Is your mistress very sick?"

"Mortal sick, sir."

"I will then go myself," said Doctor Courtlandt, "but go on: do not turn back on that account. Go!"

The negro again pressed his horse into a gallop, and went down the steep road at full speed.

"This interferes with our ride, Max," said Doctor Courtlandt: and raising his voice, "my horse!" he said.

A horse, fresh and spirited, was soon led to the door, and Doctor Courtlandt, having rapidly but quietly filled his valise with medicines, mounted and rode roundly in the direction from which the servant had made his appearance.

He descended the western slope of the Sleepy Creek Mountain, and in an hour of rapid riding arrived at the Glades, whence he was destined to find not only a patient but an old friend.

This was Josephine Emberton.

CHAPTER V.

THE DOCTOR PAYS A PROFESSIONAL VISIT TO AN OLD ACQUAINTANCE.

DOCTOR COURTLANDT scarcely threw a glance on the quiet, silent mansion, embowered in the many-colored foliage of the bright fall. Yet that mansion had in its very outward appearance and surroundings, much to indicate to the quick, traveled eye of such a man as Doctor Courtlandt, the character of its occupant. There was a quiet elegance in every detail, in the neatly arranged yard with its plats of autumn flowers—the marigold and late primrose and wild-growing golden rod and aster—in the tasteful garden with its gravel walks, in the white railing, the vine-woven shutters, and plain wicker benches on the portico. It was plain that this house was inhabited by a woman or a man of extraordinary elegance and refinement.

The doctor rapidly approached the door, and let the large bronze knocker fall upon the plate.

A servant came to the door.

“Miss Emberton,” said Doctor Courtlandt briefly, and passing as he spoke into the drawing-room.

“She’s sick, sir: she can’t see any body.”

“Go and tell her that Doctor Courtlandt has come to see her. I know your mistress is sick. Come, hasten!”

The servant—a neatly dressed girl—went out and almost immediately returned, and said that her mistress would see Doctor Courtlandt. The doctor entered the sick chamber, and approached his patient.

Josephine Emberton scarcely resembled in any particular, the merry young girl we have seen in her school

days at Mrs. Courtlandt's. She was now more gentle, more quiet, more feminine in all things, and her cheeks had lost much of that healthful color which then ran riot in them. True, this was no more than one might have expected in a sick person, it may be said; but the patient never wholly loses the characteristics of the same individual when in health, and it was very plain that the gentle, subdued woman who now lay wan and pale, but still beautiful, before the physician, was not the little terma-gant we have met with in her girlhood, full of mischief and a very Beatrice with her tongue.

The messenger whom Doctor Courtlandt had stopped riding post haste, had somewhat exaggerated his mistress's sickness. It was not at all critical, but amply sufficient to need the services of a physician. Doctor Courtlandt very soon made his diagnosis of the malady, and told Miss Emberton that she would be well in three days.

She smiled faintly.

"You seem to be very confident, doctor. I confess I was very much frightened," she said, "but I was always a coward on the sick bed; it is my great weakness. When did you return, however? I had not heard of it."

"To-day, madam," said Doctor Courtlandt, "and I had scarcely seen one of my friends when I heard of your indisposition."

"You were very kind—"

"To come and prescribe?"

"Yes."

The doctor shrugged his shoulders.

"It is plain you do not comprehend our code, madam," he replied. "To meet a servant galloping at full speed for medical assistance—to be told that a patient is lying dangerously ill—after this for a physician to shake his head and say, 'Tis none of my business, but Dr. Blank's—it would be infamous."

"Jane frightened Cato very much, I suppose; she is a good girl, and said what she thought, no doubt."

"It would have been unpardonable in me to consult my convenience at any time," said Doctor Courtlandt, "if you really needed me for any matter however slight. We have been friends a long time. But you had better remain quiet, madam. We may interchange our ideas very well next week. Where is your brother? He should not leave you."

"He went to Bath last week. I have sent for him to return, as I am alone here since my father's death, you know."

"Yes, madam, I was informed of it; your brother will come back, then?"

"Yes; Robert loves me very much; and though he is a great beau with the ladies—he is nineteen, nearly twenty—he will hurry back, I know."

"Well; I will now take my leave. Should you feel nervous symptoms, take two spoonfuls of this—but only until your physician comes. It will be for him then to prescribe—different from myself, should it please him."

And bowing, Doctor Courtlandt left the room, promising to return on the next day.

He mounted his horse, and slowly took his way back to the Lock, admiring the beautiful sunset and the splendid autumn woods, which, like an army with a thousand glittering spear points and many-colored banners, proudly reared aloft, stood waiting for the wind's loud trumpet-blast—the signal for dire conflict with old winter. Every where the leaves had warped and reddened, and a few, become deep brown now, whirled from time to time from the boughs to the thick carpet underneath the trees. The whole landscape was softened, and much beautified by the light haze of autumn drooping like a rosy cloud above the mountains, as above the lowland; and Doctor Courtlandt gazed upon the fair scene with pensive admiration.

Then his thoughts, for a moment thrown back on his past, returned to the patient he had just left.

"Ah," he murmured, "what a wondrous thing is life! how full of mysteries the simplest scene—the very lightest matter! Men take no heed of the philosophic side of life, lost as they are in a thousand absorbing pursuits of love and glory, and mere money, very often—moreover custom has staled all for them, but not for me! Yet I may well doubt if this penetrating eye I arrogate to myself is a blessing—any thing to felicitate myself upon! Why should I curl my lip and say, '*I am Sir Oracle*'—I am a profound thinker—you are only *men*? The lover sighs and follows beauty like her shadow, and may well be said to dream, since he is absorbed by his passion, and lives in another world, above the earth—a grand empyrean full of joy and splendor. He lives his life, though he is a thousand times undone; though harshness, coldness, and contempt remind him feelingly how much sad truth those words, the '*pangs of despised love*' contain! He lives his life, rapt for a time above the ground, in the blue, joyful air of the mid-heaven—and though he falls, and his poor heart is dashed to death upon the rocks of hate—still he has all that glorious happy past! His heart for a time has beat far faster than his race's—he has little to complain of—there is in his woeful plight but little food for philosophic scorn.

"And he too who rules, and breasts the flood of enmity and eternal opposition in the high places of this world, has little to complain of if the dark day comes, and he is hurled from the full sunlight to oblivion. He has lived his life; as he who toils for wealth, and satisfies his cravings, and dies destitute after a long splendid glittering career, has also in truth lived.

"They all have been absorbed in toil of the brain or the heart, and have not slept a moment like the dull weed which hugs itself at ease and slowly rots—contented, care-

less. Why then should I despise these men, and arrogate to myself so much more lofty a philosophy, a brain so much more free from mist and passion? *I* boast a cool, calculating brain—seeing through all things, love and ambition and all human passions, unmoved by any of them!”

The Doctor's head fell mournfully on his breast; his memories had overwhelmed him for the moment.

“*I*,” he murmured, “who have loved so much, and—though I put on dissimulation like a mask—so profoundly always! *I* jest at love, when so many dear dead ones have wrung tears from my heart long years, until I thought the very fountains of my soul were dry! God forgive me, I am weaker and more arrogant than a petted and be-praised child, who knowing nothing, thinks he has exhausted all human erudition! *I* laugh at men for yielding to their passions with my thirst for love and glory—though now my heart is growing very cold; yes, very, very cold!”

“Well, this perhaps explains my musings upon the mysteries of life. The heart of the poor son was chilled by the unearthly visitor, before he gave up all the joys of youth, and love, and station, to moralize upon the skull of the dead jester! Life was the mystery only after he had seen the ghost; his heart was cold then—reason took her throne; though but a poor brainsick reason.”

The Doctor went on slowly, gazing listlessly at the grand landscape.

“Now who could have imagined that this beautiful and well-proportioned nature would so change—though I am, perhaps, wrong in thinking that the change is for the worse. Who could recognize in the gentle, somewhat apathetic woman lying yonder calmly and thoughtfully, the sparkling child I danced with in my boyhood, jested with, and so often encountered in wit-combats, when she always drove me from the field! Who would imagine that this glittering star which sparkled so brightly above

my boyhood long ago, could have so changed ! If I were a poet," the Doctor mused with a sad smile, "I might say she shines upon the front of the fair past, like a bright jewel on a lady's brow ! What fire, what splendor, what vivacity and wit ! And now—it is most melancholy—what an apathetic lip and eye and voice ; so calm, so spiritless, so changed in every thing.

"But all things change—a profound, but not an original remark. All these leaves so gayly dancing in the wind will soon be gone—they had their youth and ripeness ; now they grow old and change. Poor human nature—it is melancholy ! most melancholy ! But one word concludes and answers all," the Doctor murmured, "the word which has escaped with irresistible emphasis from the lips of mightiest conquerors, from the hearts of the most subtle casuists when their last hour tolled in their dull, hardened ears ; the word which the poor dying boaster and swash-buckler, overcome like his loftier brothers, uttered, when dying he 'babbled of green fields.' One word elucidates the mystery, fixes the bourne of thought—that word is 'God !'"

CHAPTER VI.

THE DOCTOR SUGGESTS TO MAX AN OFFICIAL VISIT TO RICHMOND.

ON the next morning Doctor Courtlandt descended to breakfast buoyant and smiling, and gayly rubbing his hands. He bade Mrs. Courtlandt and Max, who were already down, a hearty and cheerful good-morrow.

"Why, Max!" he said, "you already show the mountain air. Ah! 'tis almost indispensable to one who has drawn it in with his first breath—been 'brought up to it,' as the phrase goes. The lowlands yonder don't get the finest quality, as the merchants say. That is for us the merry mountaineers. Come, excellent Mrs. Courtlandt, some breakfast, if you please!"

Max received his father's congratulations on his good looks with a listless smile, but replied, that he thought he was quite well.

"You are somewhat delicate, my boy," Doctor Courtlandt cheerfully said, "but that is owing to our annoying sea voyage. You can not imagine what horrible weather we had, aunt," he continued, turning to Mrs. Courtlandt who was superintending the arrangement of the breakfast table, "and as you never were at sea, I believe, you can not form any idea of that most disagreeable *rolling* of the vessel. Why, our cabin was half the time standing on its head—nearly literally, for the vessel was on her beam-ends, and it was hard to say which was the floor, which the ceiling. See this pearl colored coat I have on: it was the pride of a Parisian tailor—*La Fère, rue Grenoble*, you recollect, Max—well, the water we shipped gave it these pleasantly variegated tints: see on the shoulder."

"Had you a storm?"

"Yes, yes, my dear aunt; and Max stood it like a hero—a real hero—delicate as he is. I believe his heroic bearing, though, was somewhat owing to the fact that he had to keep up the spirits of a nice young lady he met with on board."

Max smiled sadly.

"He was a great beau on board, aunt," the Doctor continued, "but I see breakfast is ready; let us sit down—come, my boy!"

"What a fine day it is," said Mrs. Courtlandt, "you have not ridden over the farm yet, nephew. But you will have a fine morning for it now."

"Man proposes but God disposes," said the Doctor, "I had intended to do so to-day, but must really go and see Barry and the folks over there—since they won't come to see me. Besides I must make another visit to Miss Emberton."

"Is she dangerously indisposed?"

"Oh, no: very slightly."

"An old friend of yours, nephew—long ago," said Mrs. Courtlandt.

"Yes, yes," said the Doctor, "and I find her much altered. Once she was all vivacity and merriment, you recollect: now she is decidedly tame—tamed I suppose is a politer word. Time! time! how it changes us all."

"It has changed *you* little."

"I am naturally buoyant—constitutionally, but I am older, older, aunt; I begin to feel it."

"Very little in temperament, nephew."

"Much, much, my dear aunt."

"You are as merry as ever."

"All forced, aunt," Doctor Courtlandt replied, sadly smiling, with a covert glance at Max, "but speaking of merriment, I am going to have a dinner—do you feel equal to it?"

"A dinner, nephew?"

"Yes; I must formally announce my return. I have fixed on next Friday, does that suit you?"

"Hum," said Mrs. Courtlandt, "yes, nephew, certainly: let me see; oh! yes, we can get ready very well by that time."

"You shall write the invitations—you are much better acquainted than I am. Undertake all that for me, dear aunt; but I will give you such names as occur to me. Have you any friends, Max, you would like to see? Indicate them."

"I don't know that I have, sir," said Max, "I was so young when I went away, and lived so much at home and in town, that—"

"Well, well; in future you will mix more with the world. A man must not live 'like his grandsire carved in alabaster,' you know. I intend you to study law, be a politician, run for the county—go to Richmond; the family expects much of you, my youngster."

Max smiled.

"I don't think I could ever make a speech, sir," he answered.

"Not make a speech?"

"A political speech."

"Why not? 'Tis the easiest thing in life! But half-a-dozen ideas are necessary. 'Resolutions of '98—crisis in the affairs of the nation—the Proclamation—state rights—strict construction,' there is your speech made up at once!"

"I have no taste for politics, sir."

"But still would you not like to go to Richmond—that centre of civilization, that paragon of cities?"

"You are laughing, sir."

"Did you not like Richmond?"

"Yes, sir—it is a pretty place; but I would rather live here."

"Here in the backwoods?"

"I like the backwoods better than Paris, sir," said Max, smiling.

"Ah! now I see your objections to Richmond. It is too elegant, too brilliant. You fear its attractions; but I ought not to laugh at our capital, which is after all a fine place—and I have many good friends there. I think you would enjoy yourself much if you represented us in the Legislature there, my boy."

"Why I am not nineteen, sir."

"Quite old enough to rule the world—but there is time enough for all that. To-day I do not ask you to devote your thoughts to politics—but to society. What say you—shall we go at once to see the folks at hunter John's?"

"Yes, sir—certainly."

"Do you remember them?"

"Not very well, sir. I was too young."

"Not even your nice little cousins, Alice and Caroline?"

"Very slightly, sir; we were all children, and I was very unsocial."

"Well, well; we will go at once—though I think they should have called to see us. They must know we have returned."

And the Doctor rose from the breakfast table. At the same moment the noise of wheels was heard on the hard road, and going out into the portico, brilliantly illuminated by the rosy sunlight of the beautiful October morning, Doctor Courtlandt saw his brother getting out of his small covered carriage.

The doctor ran down the steps, and in instant had his brother pressed to his heart. The eyes of the two men were full of joyful tears.

CHAPTER VII.

CAROLINE AND ALICE.

BEFORE the Doctor could so much as ask his brother how he was, a gay voice from the carriage exclaimed :

"Oh, uncle Max ! oh, uncle Max ! we're so glad to see you !"

"Who's that, pray ?" cried the Doctor, hurrying to the carriage.

"Me, uncle ; Caroline ! Caroline and Alice."

"Bless my heart !" cried Doctor Courtlandt, "have I any nieces so tall and charming ! Is it possible that my bad little children have grown up such elegant damsels !"

"Yes—here are your bad little children," said Caroline, laughing and springing at one quick bound into the arms that were opened to receive her, "I'm very bad yet, uncle Max ! but I am so, so glad to see you !"

With which words the girl threw her arms round his neck and kissed him most enthusiastically.

"Why, how nice she is !" cried the Doctor, "a perfect fairy ! And where is my little Alice ?"

"Here I am, uncle," said a musical voice behind Caroline. "I was on the wrong side you know, uncle, or I would have had the first kiss."

And Alice more quietly got out of the carriage, but quite as affectionately greeted her uncle.

"What fairies !" cried the delighted Doctor, "did any body ever—"

"No, never !" said Caroline, with a burst of merry laughter. "And how stately you have begun to look," she added. "Oh, what a bear you are with that enormous beard."

"I won't eat you, Carry!"

"I'm not afraid."

"And you are not, I know, Alice," said Doctor Courtlandt.

"Oh, no! not of you, uncle," said Alice, demurely, "no body could be afraid of *you*."

"What a little witch. Let's see, how old?"

"I'm seventeen, uncle," Alice replied.

"And so am I!" cried Caroline. "Where's cousin Max?"

"There, on the porch; he will be delighted to see you."

"But I won't kiss him," said Caroline, pouting and shaking her head, "I am too old now to kiss cousins."

"Maybe he won't ask you," said Doctor Courtlandt, delighted, "but never mind, *I* will always kiss you, that will console you. Come, Alice dear, there is your father already shaking hands with Max."

The two young women, each with an arm round Doctor Courtlandt's waist, demurely drew near the group upon the porch.

"Here are the girls, Max," said the Doctor. "Caroline—this is Caroline—says she will not kiss you."

"Alice too!" cried Caroline. "I am not by myself. You know we are growing too old."

Max with a slight blush stepped forward gracefully, and inclosed the two young girls in his arms.

"You know," he said, smiling, "this is mere French form; I could not assent to your being too *old*, cousin Caroline—nor you, cousin Alice."

With which words Max very calmly kissed both his cousins.

"Bravo!" cried Doctor Courtlandt, laughing. "What do you say now, Miss Caroline."

Caroline submitted to the Doctor's raillery with a good grace; Alice with some blushes.

"Go make Max's acquaintance, girls," said the Doctor, "you would find a walk out on the hill side, or mountain

rather, a much more pleasant pastime, than a chat here with an old man of science like myself."

"Oh, no!" said Caroline, coquettishly. "I prefer the risen to the rising generation, decidedly. I want you to tell me all about your travels."

"My travels?"

"Yes indeed, uncle. You have been away so long, oh so long; mother says she never expected to see you again."

"Why did she not come to-day? Is she unwell, Barry?" asked the Doctor.

"Somewhat, brother," said the Rev. Mr. Courtlandt in his soft voice, "she was afraid of the ride in the cool air, though she was longing to see you."

"I will go over this very moment; I must see her."

"Not before you have given us an account of your travels," said Caroline.

"Why, Max will do as much, niece; ask him."

Max, with his hat in his hand, stood quietly aloof. All his momentary vivacity had disappeared, and his face had fallen back, so to speak, into its old, sad, listless expression of weariness and melancholy. A shadow passed over the Doctor's brow, and an acute pain seemed to agitate his features, as his eye fell upon his son. But by a powerful effort of that strong will which was the most striking trait in his character, he banished the shadow from his brow and the tremor from his lips, if not the pain from his heart.

"Will you not, Max?" he added.

"Certainly, sir," replied the young man, listlessly, "I will answer any questions cousin Caroline or cousin Alice ask me, with pleasure."

"Hum!" said Caroline pouting, "we want you to tell us all about it, cousin Maximilian. We would not know what questions to ask."

Max bowed slightly.

"And do you suppose," said the Doctor, "that I would

sit down and commence, *ab initio*, the narrative of my travels, Miss Caroline? Upon my word the young ladies of the present day are exceedingly reasonable. Come, Max is waiting; go and walk. We old people will remain behind."

The young girls and Max saw that the brothers wished to converse alone, and so without further parley left them.

The Doctor and the Rev. Mr. Courtlandt gazed at each other with much feeling, separated as they had been so long. The minister was a very different personage from that Barry whose boyhood and early manhood we have seen something of;—for those twenty years which had so little changed Maximilian Courtlandt, had slowly but surely revolutionized his brother's character. He was still most affectionate and tender even; but far more grave; and on his broad, firm brow study and the weight of pastoral duty had made many wrinkles. He was pale and serious; but now his face was lit up with unaccustomed joy. His whole heart seemed to go forth to embrace the heart of his brother, and tears for a moment dimmed his large thoughtful eyes. Then they commenced the conversation which friends and relations are always so eager for, after a long absence. The clergyman told his brother all the events which had taken place in the neighborhood, during those long years of his absence—the deaths, the births, the marriages—the thousand familiar occurrences which only conversation can convey; which are found neither in the newspapers, nor in the correspondence of our friends. The Doctor then in the same manner gave an account of his "life and adventures" since their parting; and then the conversation turned upon Max.

"Max is still listless and melancholy," said the Doctor, "you know this was the reason for my expatriation so long. I do not think he is much better, and I have returned with a smile on my lip, but much sadness in my heart, to the old scenes here, with the hope that the soci-

ety of friends and relations will work some change for the better in his spirits."

"He does not look well."

"No; we had a terrible scene down there in Martinsburg—at the old house. Jenny, the old nurse, you know, grew garrulous and agitated Max very much—though God pardon me, I thought he could not be more deeply affected. Well, brother, I hope all this will wear off with time. He is better after all, I hope; though not much. I tried him with every possible diversion—but none absorbed him sufficiently to drown his memories. He was always the same calm face, the same unimpressible heart.

"But let us end this sad talk; I have great hopes of the boy now we are once more back to the old scenes. These are almost new to him; as we lived in the old happy days," the doctor said sighing, "down in Martinsburg. Fresh mountain air, the exercise he will take, and, not least, the society of Caroline and Alice will I am sure make him once more a merry-hearted boy, instead of the sombre and unsocial man of thirty which he now resembles.—What charming children are your girls, brother!" added the Doctor more cheerfully, and half-persuaded by his own reasoning of the happiness his buoyant nature shaped for him; "never have I seen brighter faces or merrier hearts! But come, the sunlight is admirable; let us take a stroll; I begin to feel like my former self again."

CHAPTER VIII.

MAX AND CAROLINE.

MAX and the young ladies, his cousins, had a very pleasant stroll on the bright mountain side, which was now of a thousand colors. The autumn had made every leaf blue, or yellow, or crimson, and when the wind shook them together and came sobbing on from the far distance, ever increasing in loudness until it passed on again and died away, they resembled so many fluttering pennons such as the knights of old times bore proudly aloft—the gifts of their ladies fair—upon the heads of their upright lances.

The two young girls, for a moment children again at meeting once more with their long absent uncle, were now more reserved and more like women. In truth they were both upon the verge of womanhood, and if their first meeting with Doctor Courtlandt seemed to stamp them as mere impulsive children, their conduct on that occasion must be attributed to the fact that he had always been their fast friend and even playmate, and they were, thus, overjoyed to see him back again. They now returned to their usual placid and cheerful manner—Caroline laughing gayly, it is true, at every thing; but quite womanly in spite of it.

They were twins, and resembled each other strikingly—though Caroline was much the taller of the two, and had far more vivacity than Alice, whose large liquid eyes were full of softness and tenderness.

Max enjoyed the stroll very much; the fresh air seemed to enter into his blood and vivify it. His cheek brightened, he smiled often, and catching from Caroline the

contagious buoyancy of her own spirits, became more cheerful than he had been for years.

"How long you have been absent," said Caroline, "but now you are back again to stay, are you not?"

"Yes—I hope so, at least."

"You will be quite an acquisition to the neighborhood," said the young girl, laughing. "We have no beaux here now, but Robert Emberton and some few more."

"Robert Emberton—of the Glades?"

"Yes."

"Is he agreeable?"

"Horrid, cousin Max! You can not imagine what a fop he is—nothing seems to interest him; he says he is *ennuyé*."

Max smiled.

"What is he *ennuyé* about?" he asked.

- "Nothing!" Caroline replied. "I suppose he thinks it graceful to yawn and declare that the world is a *bore*—that is his word; and pretend that nothing amuses him. I told him when he came to see me last, that I couldn't think of causing him such an inconvenience as a ride to the Parsonage—grandfather's, you know—when it was so very very far from the Glades—"

"Why, it is not."

"About ten miles—not more, in truth. But to a person who thinks every thing a 'bore,' ten miles must be a very great distance to ride—with only a dull young lady to see."

"If he said you were dull he showed very little taste," said Max, gallantly, "you are any thing but dull, cousin Caroline."

"Thank you, cousin Max; you have been traveling, and now you come to make your pretty speeches to us country girls."

"Why, that is not a pretty speech," said Max, smiling, "only the truth."

"Thank you, then."

"And do *you* think Mr. Robert Emberton is so affected, cousin Alice," asked the young man.

"Oh, no ; I think he is very witty and amusing," said Alice, with a demure smile, "he says I am not half as dull as he has heard people say."

"And so you think he is impudent—not ridiculous, as Caroline, I mean cousin Caroline, says?"

"No ; he is not impudent. I think he is very amusing, and though he certainly is affected, I am sure he is a very nice fellow."

"A difference of opinion certainly, and I must judge for myself. I am going to live here now, and though I am not well, and very little inclined to go into society, I shall visit you and uncle Barry often, when I shall doubtless see Mr. Emberton."

"Have you been sick?" asked Alice.

Max's face, clouded.

"No," he said, "but very low spirited."

"Oh, you must not be low spirited, cousin," said Caroline, "never be low spirited. There is nothing in the wide world more—unphilosophical—that is the right word, I believe—than low spirits. You shall come and see us, and, if necessary, I will laugh all day long to amuse you. Then we will ride together, walk together, flirt together, if you choose."

Max's momentary sadness disappeared before these merry and joyous words.

"You have a great many pleasant things in store for me, cousin," he said, smiling. "How can I thank you—for the thousand suggestions you make, all tending to remove my unhappy malady, low spirits? I agree to all without hesitation—"

"Even the last?"

"The last—?"

"That we shall flirt together, you know. You agree to that, too?"

Max shrugged his shoulders : had Doctor Courtlandt seen that shrug he would have been overjoyed.

"You must teach me," he replied, with a smile and a glance of admiration at his cousin.

"Teach you to flirt?"

"Certainly."

"*You* not know how to flirt?"

"Why should I be so well-instructed, pray, cousin Caroline—come, tell me."

"Why, you are so experienced—"

"I am a mere boy, as you see."

"So old—"

"I am not yet nineteen."

"Oh, that is nothing I am but seventeen. You may be very young, but you are very much of a traveler—have been I mean."

"I am afraid I have traveled without eyes, if travelers necessarily learn how to flirt with ladies."

"Well I am jesting as usual, I perceive. Come, cousin, tell us of your travels—when you went away you were a mere child—a boy, if you prefer."

Max's countenance assumed its old listless expression of melancholy gravity.

"I could only tell you that we went all over Europe, and that I was very slightly interested with any thing."

Caroline did not observe the melancholy expression of the young man's countenance, and would have pressed him further, but Alice changed the conversation. The past, she saw, was plainly full of shadow for the young man, and like a woman of intelligence she determined to endeavor thenceforth to wean his thoughts from it. She had already penetrated his secret grief, that grief so apparent in his sad eyes and lips.

"See what a beautiful primrose up there by the golden-rod, cousin Max," she said, pointing to a rock which overhung, like a miniature precipice, their path, "gather it for me, please."

"And some for me, my cavalier," said Caroline.

"With pleasure," said Max, and after considerable trouble, he brought both the primrose and the golden-rod, from their places on the steep side of the mossy rock.

"How sweet!" said Caroline, "and this golden-rod would really ornament the flower vases beautifully. Get some more, cousin Max."

The young man smilingly complied, and after a quarter of an hour's toil clambering hither and thither, returned with his arms full of primroses, asters, and other flowers of the autumn. Caroline received them joyfully.

"What a fine color you have now, cousin Max!" said Alice, quietly, "your cheeks are as red as peonies."

"I am sure you only want exercise to be as hardy as a mountaineer," said Caroline, "now let us go back, cousin, for I think father will wish to return: how beautiful my flowers are!" she added, "and how much I am obliged to you, cousin Max."

"I am the gainer, I believe," said the young man, smiling, "I feel more buoyant than I have felt for a great while."

"I am glad our acquaintance has commenced so propitiously," said Alice, smiling upon the young man, and taking timidly his offered arm, "you must come to the Parsonage now, and we will walk out, and you shall gather some of our flowers."

"As I live!" cried Caroline, "here is uncle coming to meet us. Oh, uncle, see my pretty flowers, which cousin Max collected for me. He is an elegant beau!"

"And you a belle of the finest metal," said the delighted Doctor, "I have never heard a clapper—by which rude word I mean a female tongue—which made more musical utterance. It is far merrier than the merriest cathedral chimes—your laughter, I mean, Carry—which is a very gallant speech you must confess in an old *savant* like myself."

"Cousin Max is gallant, too," said Caroline," very gallant."

"How could I be otherwise with you," said Max, laughing and bowing.

"See now the fine foreign gentleman with his elegant *congé!*" said Caroline, merrily.

"Bravo!" cried the Doctor, overjoyed at seeing his son so animated, and his cheeks so healthfully red, "she has you there, Max! Come you may take *my* arm, Carry, as you and Max have quarreled."

And so they returned to the Lock, in cheerful talk.

CHAPTER IX.

HUNTER JOHN AGAIN: THE WANING GENERATION.

DOCTOR COURTLANDT determined to accompany his brother to the Parsonage, inasmuch as it was not so much out of his road to Miss Emberton's, and this determination gave Caroline great delight. The day was entirely too fine, she said, for one to be shut up in a carriage, and now she would ride behind her uncle.

To this proposition, Doctor Courtlandt with great readiness consented, and his aunt having brought out a voluminous shawl, and spread it carefully upon the back of her nephew's horse in order that the young girl's pretty pink dress might not be soiled, Caroline with one quick spring took her place behind Doctor Courtlandt, and the party set forward toward the Parsonage. As for Max, he promised to ride over in the afternoon.

The day was splendid, as our October days nearly always are, with their brilliant sunlight, invigorating breezes, and variegated trees and grasses. The small streams ran merrily in the full fair light; the blue sky—without a cloud, but shadowed by a tender delicate haze drooped like a magical curtain over the far azure headlands of the green valley sea—the Sleepy Creek and Third Hill mountain peaks; and the whole air seemed to be alive with happiness and joy.

"Oh, uncle Max," cried Caroline, "how glad we all are you have come back again! But I believe I am more delighted than any one else—for you know I always was your pet: wasn't I?"

"By no means—not a bit more than Alice, you little rogue—not a bit."

"You *will* call me 'little.'"

"And are you not?"

"No."

"How, pray? Are you so very huge, mademoiselle?"

"Yes, monsieur. I am seventeen, and at that age young ladies are not *little* things."

"I suppose then you have already made up your mind to get married."

"No, I have not."

"Will you be an old maid?"

"Yes."

"What will you do?"

"Keep house for Alice and Robert Emberton."

"Hum!" said the Doctor, "is that all arranged, eh?"

"By no means; but he is the only beau in the neighborhood, and Alice is a great deal prettier than I am."

"Are you jealous of her?"

"No, I am not—but I would be, if it was not for one thing."

"What is that, pray?"

"Max's coming."

"What has the arrival of Max to do with your jealousy?"

"Max shall be my beau."

The Doctor sighed and smiled.

"That is all very well," he said, "but there is an old proverb, mademoiselle, which is somewhat applicable here."

"What is it?"

"That it takes two to make a bargain."

Caroline laughed.

"Oh, Max likes me well enough," she said, "and as he is a much nicer person than Mr. Robert Emberton I will have him for my cavalier."

The Doctor sighed.

"Max is not very well," he said, "but you have it in

your power, Carry dear, to be of very great service to him."

"How, uncle Max?"

"By coaxing him out of his reserve and melancholy. If Max was happy he would be as stout as a plowman."

"Is he unhappy, uncle?" asked Caroline.

"Very, my dear Carry; very unhappy, and this is what afflicts me so much. It would make a new man of me were Max to grow gay and cheerful—try now and amuse him."

"Indeed I will, dear uncle," said Caroline, tenderly, "and on your account, for I dearly love you, uncle Max."

The doctor took the little hand which clung to his waist and affectionately pressed it.

"That is a good girl," he said, "you and Alice too. We are to have a dinner in three or four days, and this, with your society will, I trust, wean Max from his melancholy thoughts. He requires to be interested—employed; if he is idle and has not congenial society he is gloomy. We met little such abroad, and I am afraid our long residence in Italy was scarcely a benefit to him."

"Oh, how I should like to go to Italy," cried Caroline, "what a beautiful country it must be, uncle."

"Yes—very beautiful."

"But it could not be much prettier than our mountains here. Look how grand they are—leaves of all possible colors! and then see how pretty the Parsonage is, coming out from the trees, on the side of the hill. It is the nicest little house in the valley."

"Yes; it is much changed, however. Ah, how familiar every thing is!" said the Doctor. "Time! time!—time is a dreadful but very instructive thing, Carry! Come, we are at the end of our ride. Your father is out of the carriage; and Alice—what a little fairy she is!"

Hunter John Myers, that stalwart mountaineer of old days, came out to meet them. He was no longer stalwart,

but bent down with years—those heavy stones which falling slowly one by one upon the shoulders of the strongest bend them to the earth, their resting-place. The old man's head was snow-white, and his eye dimmed. It was many years since it had flashed, as was its wont in the past. His strong stride was now a feeble walk; his gait had changed like all the rest. A venerable landmark of the past, he stood on the confines of the two eras, like an historical monument separating widely different lands.

He was still clad in his old hunting shirt which had seen so much service in the woods, now waning before his eyes; his head was still crowned with its regal otter skin. At his feet a number of veteran deer hounds crouched, whose days of activity and strength, like his own, were slowly dropping into past days. Never would they tear the throat of the deer brought to bay any more; never again hear the hunter's horn, unless their old worn out master, in melancholy jest, should take it from its nail, and startle their old ears as they lay dreaming in the sunshine.

The hunting days of the old man were over; he was on the verge of the grave—painfully dragging along his feeble limbs which he supported with a knotty stick. But for all this his spirits had not left him. He was still cheerful and hopeful; and came to meet his visitors now with hearty pleasure in his old face.

"Welcome, Doctor," he said, "my old eyes are blessed to see you back safe and sound once more. I'd most nigh given you up—'way off in foreign parts; but here you are back again. Back strong and hearty, not like me, old and weak and poorly. Welcome—welcome."

"You are not so bad as you say, my good old friend," replied the Doctor, clasping the honest hand with kindly warmth, "I bless heaven you are so well."

"I am not long for this world," said the old man, "soon the mortal part of the man who went by the name o' Hunt-

er John Myers on this earth, will be in the dust;—but pray God his soul will return to that all-wise and loving Creator who has been so good to him, through a long happy life.”

“Pray God!” returned the Doctor, holding down his head, and much affected by the old man’s changed and feeble voice.

“That’s all I ask,” said the hunter, looking thoughtfully out on the beautiful landscape, “I have lived my life, and it was not so easy and well-doin’ in the old Injun times; but I never could complain of any thing, and I’ve had more ’an my deserts. I’m most nigh gone away now to the other country; when the Lord calls me, I hope I will be ready.”

Then leading the way, they entered the house. Mrs. Sally Courtlandt received them—the same tender, earnest loving face of old times—the same soft voice which had filled the long past years, for many there, with music. She was little changed; the girl had become a woman—that was all. She was happy in possessing so good and tender a husband, in being able to minister to the wants of the old man—in having dutiful and affectionate children. Those blessings which had followed the “darling” of the valley long ago into the new land of matrimony, had not been uttered in vain, it seemed.

The house inside was little changed, but some additions had been made, and some improvements introduced. Sally’s little chamber was now that of the sisters.

“The house has been plastered,” said hunter John, “and they’ve put up a porch in front—none of my doings, Doctor, you may be sure. I wanted them, though, to beautify the place when my son was minister. They most nigh refused, but had it done; so you see it ain’t my doin’—but they did it because I wanted ’em to.”

“It’s much nicer, I think, grandfather,” said Alice sitting down by him and affectionately resting her head on

his shoulder, "the vines too improve it—in front, you know."

The old man, with an expression of great affection on his placid features, patted the little hand which clasped his own.

"Yes, yes, Alice darling," he said, "the new things are prettier than the old—the young fairer than the aged. But what is Oscar growling about?"

The old stag hound rose to his feet and looked toward the door, evidently moved to this unusual demonstration by the approach of some visitor. At the same moment the hoof-strokes of a horse were heard, and mingled with this measured sound a young man's voice humming a merry song.

"Who is that?" asked Doctor Courtlandt, "some visitor, Carry?"

"Not mine!" said Caroline indifferently.

"But who is it?—he has dismounted apparently."

"It is Robert Emberton," said Alice, rising from her seat, "you know, the brother of Miss Josephine, uncle."

At the same moment the young man entered the room, bowing to the company.

Miss M. H. H.

CHAPTER X.

MR. ROBERT EMBERTON : THE RISING GENERATION.

IF hunter John Myers, with his gray hair, old fashioned dress, and rude plain dialect, was a type of the venerable and moving past, the young man who now entered, graceful, smiling, ready in speech, and clad in the very latest fashion, presented a tolerably accurate specimen of the "new men" and the changed world which had taken the place of the old rugged times gone by.

Robert Emberton was a handsome young man of nineteen, with bright eyes, erect carriage, and graceful person. There was little of the boy about him, in feature, figure, or manner. He was perfectly easy and self-possessed ; carried his head, as the phrase goes, elegantly ; and seemed to look upon society and human existence as a rather amusing comedy, which every one had tacitly consented to act as well as possible for the moment—with a perfect understanding, however, that it was all for amusement and had no particle of reality at bottom. He was elegantly dressed, as we have said, and in the very latest fashion. From his fingers dangled a light whalebone cane with a deer's foot at its top, and in the other hand he carried easily a well smoothed beaver hat.

The young man's easy negligence of manner somewhat changed when he perceived Doctor Courtlandt's piercing eye fixed upon him, and he bowed to that gentleman profoundly. Certainly he had not paid the same compliment to any other person for a long time, and this unusual circumstance may be accounted for, on the ground that Mr. Robert Emberton had never yet met with so distinguished a man in countenance and manner, as the individual who

now stood before him—with such a noble face—such brilliant eyes full of intelligence and mental power—such a forehead where thought sat enthroned in quiet majesty. But perhaps the young man's unusual respect was more still to be attributed to the accounts he had heard of Doctor Courtlandt from his sister—more than all, possibly, to the long travel of his new acquaintance in distant lands; for Mr. Robert Emberton had but one ambition, which ambition was to visit that centre of civilization—Paris. He fancied that the very coat the silent and grave gentleman who stood there wore, was redolent of Parisian elegance.

So Mr. Emberton, with much less easy negligence than was his custom, replied to the courteous words vouchsafed him by the Doctor.

The Doctor was pleased, he said, to make Mr. Emberton's acquaintance—since he had had that pleasure when Mr. Emberton was exceedingly young; was glad to see him now, on his return, so much improved.

The young man had intended on that morning he said, to call on the Doctor, both because he was sure he should have a very pleasant visit, and because his sister had commissioned him to say that she was now very nearly quite well.

“Which I hope,” the Doctor said, “is not to forbid my carrying out my promise to call on her to-day?”

“Oh, no, sir,” the young man said, “on the contrary, she desired me to say that she would be much pleased to see you, as your visit was very short when you called yesterday.”

“I will then go this morning as I had intended, though now Miss Emberton will have only an ordinary visitor in place of a professional one.”

Having settled this matter so satisfactorily, the Doctor left the young man to pay his addresses to the ladies, which he however seemed in no haste to do; perhaps because he had seen a great deal of them, and very little

of the Doctor, whom he had heard so much of. His society was, however, by no means so attractive as to make Doctor Courtlandt choose it in preference to that of his old friends and his brother; and so Mr. Robert Emberton was obliged to content himself with the ordinary conversation of the young ladies.

They strolled out on the hill side, followed negligently by their cavalier, who dangled his cane and yawned.

"Do you feel unwell to-day?" said Caroline, turning her head carelessly over her shoulder, and fixing her bright eyes satirically upon him.

"Unwell?" yawned the gentleman, somewhat surprised. "Why, not at all; why did you ask?"

"I thought from your manner that you were not well."

"My manner; what is peculiar in that, Miss Caroline?"

"It is so listless; one would think you were 'bored' to death, as you are fond of saying."

"The fact is, I am bored; I was, I mean, before I had the delight of gazing on your fair countenance. But I was not conscious that my ennui displayed itself so unmistakably."

"It does."

"In my conversation, eh? That is dull, you mean? My ennui is betrayed there?"

"In every thing."

"Ah, there it is! The young ladies of the present day are becoming the most extraordinary creatures. You can not yawn or complain of any thing in the whole universe, but, by Jove!—excuse me, fairest Miss Caroline—they are offended. That is not so important, however, for ladies soon recover from their ill-humor; but it really is annoying to a man of sense, that he is expected on all occasions to be in raptures, to smile, and simper, and exhaust the vocabulary of compliments and pretty speeches. I can't; it bores me."

"Are you ever any thing *but* 'bored,' sir?" asked Caroline.

"Very seldom any thing else—I have just come from Bath, up there, you know. You've heard of Bath, I suppose."

"Heard of Bath, Mr. Emberton!" said Alice, quietly, "why it is just over the mountain, and is the most fashionable watering-place in the valley."

"Well, I was about to say when you interrupted me, Miss Alice," the young man replied negligently, "that I have been bored to death there lately."

"By what, pray?" said Alice, smiling.

"By every thing; and the dreadful part of it was, that I could not escape it."

"You were not obliged to talk to the ladies, were you?"

"Oh, I did nothing of the sort. The very evening I arrived, an event happened to me which stopped all that."

"What event?"

"A young lady very nearly made a declaration to me; it was shocking though it *is* Leap Year."

"I declare you are too bad!" said Alice, laughing, "and if you were not so affected and meant half you say, I would—"

"Cut me?"

"Yes, sir, and Carry too; I know she would."

"Without hesitation," said Caroline, pouting.

This expression upon Caroline's face seemed rather to amuse Mr. Emberton.

"That would be dreadful," he said carelessly, "but I was going on with my account of the kingdom of boredom up there—or down there, as you please. It was not the *female* society—shocking phrase that, but one must use it, it is so fashionable—not the ladies who bored me. One can always decline being victimized by them, and I did decline, after waltzing to that dreadful music for one whole evening; but I could not escape the rest."

"What else wearied Mr. Emberton? I hate the word *bored*," said Caroline, "and beg you will not use it again."

"With pleasure. My tribulation arose then from the awful dressing of the company. Never have I seen any thing so horrible as the taste of those young ladies and gentlemen; it was enough to give one a chill. I became depressed, I was overcome—I was in doubt whether I was present at a social meeting of the South Sea Islanders, or the inhabitants of Nova Zembla. I came away immediately and shall not return."

"You came because your sister sent for you, did you not?" asked Alice, laughing.

"Yes; but I was coming without her request. I saw no new faces, no pretty girls—all *passées*, regular old stagers. By-the-by, speaking of new faces, you have a cousin who has just arrived have you not, my dear Miss Alice?"

"Yes; cousin Max."

"Nice fellow?"

"Very nice, I suppose; he is Caroline's beau, not mine," said Alice, laughing and blushing slightly.

"Handsome?" continued Mr. Emberton.

"Exceedingly."

"Dress well?"

"I did not observe."

"Is he *comme il faut*, I mean?"

"At least he is just from Paris."

"Then he dresses well; and as he dresses well, is exceedingly handsome, a very nice fellow, and above all your cousin," said Mr. Emberton, summing up, "I have no doubt you will fall in love with him at once, Miss Caroline."

"I believe I shall," the young girl replied.

This answer made the gentleman, strange to say, somewhat moody; he had too high an opinion of persons who had been to Paris to despise them.

"He is an admirer of yours, I believe?" asked Mr. Emberton, with affected nonchalance.

"Oh, indeed he is," said Alice, with some constraint, "he and Carry are excellent friends already."

"Keep a little corner for me in your heart, Miss Carry."

the young gentleman said, resuming his drawl, "even if I should be called on to dance at your wedding."

Caroline made no reply.

"It is not arranged entirely yet, is it?" he asked.

"No, sir! it is not!"

"Why, Miss Caroline—I really feel some trepidation; you will not eat me, will you?"

"No, sir; you are not to my taste."

"Not to your *taste*! Good! That reminds me of a friend of mine down at Bath. After half an hour's devotion to the ice cream, he said to me pathetically, 'I've eaten so much of this thing that I've got through; but it's not to my taste.' Now to apply my anecdote. You can not eat me, my dear Miss Caroline, but you can imbibe my discourse. I hope under these circumstances you have not imbibed so much of it on the present occasion that you wish you had got through with it."

"I am never guilty of impoliteness, sir," said Caroline, half offended, half ready to burst out laughing at this ridiculous reply.

"And I am sure," the young man said with a courtly bow, "*I* would not have alluded to your engagement with your cousin, had I imagined such an illusion would be thought 'impolite.'"

"I am not engaged."

A well satisfied smile lit up Mr. Robert Emberton's face at these negligent words, and the whole party having once more recovered their good humor, continued the jesting conversation, until after making the circuit of the hill, they returned to the Parsonage.

The Doctor was mounting his horse; the young man hastened up.

"Will you permit me to accompany you, sir," he asked, very deferentially.

"I will be very glad to have your company, sir," the Doctor replied; and taking leave of the family, they set forward toward the "Glades."

CHAPTER XI.

AN OLD ACQUAINTANCE.

AFTER a pleasant ride of two hours they arrived at the Glades, where the young man's multitudinous questions addressed to the Doctor, for a moment ceased to stun that gentleman's ears. At the gate stood a large lean horse champing his bit, and this caused Mr. Robert Emberton to surmise that "his dancing-master had come to give him a lesson."

The Doctor smiled; for this word "dancing-master," threw him back to former days when the art of dancing was so excellently represented in Martinsburg, by that worthy offshoot of the days of the Grand Monarque—Monsieur Pantoufle Xaupi. But what was his astonishment on entering the mansion to see approach him, no less a personage than that very Monsieur Pantoufle, twenty-five years older, and needing now no white powder on his thin elegantly dressed hair; but still supple, still bowing, ambling, smiling, still full of the thousand engaging amenities of look and manner which characterized him in those long past days, to which the Doctor's thoughts had just flown back.

Monsieur Pantoufle ran to the Doctor and embraced him enthusiastically.

"My dear friend!" cried the dancing-master, "is it possible I now see you in person, so well, so excellent-looking! Is it possible I see my much cherished friend—Monsieur Max!"

"In person;" said the Doctor, smiling and cordially returning the pressure of the old man's hand, "I am

as much surprised as yourself, Monsieur Pantoufle—but delighted to see you!”

“Ah, you charm me!”

“You are as gay as ever?”

“Not so gay,” said the old dancing-master, shaking his head. “age came on very fast; *je suis veillard*, Monsieur Max.”

“*Mais vous êtes bien aise?*”

“*Non, non, ah.* I grow old. The times pass—it is long since I fence, I dance, I play upon the harpsichord, the violin, as I used to in the old time.”

“You look very well—and almost as young as ever,” replied the Doctor.

The old man shook his head.

“I have but the spirits,” he said, “the spirits never leave me.”

That is much.”

“Yes, yes—very much. I often tell my young friend here, Monsieur Robert, to keep up the spirits; always keep up the spirits.”

“He needs it little, I think; but really I am delighted to see you,” said the kind hearted Doctor, “you recall to me a great many pleasant reminiscences of the past, though some are unpleasant, too. You recollect that I bought your coat, eh?”

“My grand monarque coat!” said the old man, shrugging his shoulders, and laughing.

“Yes, the Louis XIV.”

“I neverse can get such now,” said Monsieur Pantoufle.

“The present mode is abominable.”

“I am just from Paris.”

“From Paris; *est il possible?*”

“Direct.”

“My friends send me any message? But I have no friends now,” added the old man shaking his head. “they all pass away, they all go like the autumn leaf, in the wind; they send me any message, eh?”

"I was there but a short time and made very few acquaintances."

"You meet the Duc de Montmorenci?"

"No—your friend?"

"My cousin, my blood cousin: it is an *homme d'esprit*! But he has forgot the poor dancing-master *sans doute*."

"Well, at least I have not; for I retain too pleasant an impression of you, my dear Monsieur Pantoufle; and I wish sincerely that you may never have a day of trouble or ill health.

"I have had much; but the spirits have not leave me. I come, Monsieur Robert," he added, turning to the young man, "to give you your dancing lesson; I was grieve to hear of Mademoiselle's sickness, and was going back to Bath, but she send me word she would come see me—I must wait; *à la bonne heure*. She is here."

Miss Josephine Emberton entered, still pale and looking feeble, but evidently not otherwise unwell. She greeted the Doctor with manifest pleasure, and expressed her great satisfaction at seeing him back again, very gracefully.

"I scarcely exchanged three words with you yesterday," she said, "and now, Doctor, you must give me leave to make my speech out, you know. It really looks like old times to see you and Monsieur Pantoufle face to face; it reminds me of the happy days of my girlhood in Martinsburg, when I was so young and merry."

"Ah," said Monsieur Pantoufle, with a very engaging bow, "you jest Mademoiselle: you are very young—not twenty years, I think, indeed."

"You are very gallant, Monsieur Pantoufle," Miss Emberton replied, languidly, but smiling kindly on the old man, "and I always know what to expect from you when I make any allusion to my age."

"Permit me, madam, also to reiterate Monsieur Pantoufle's compliment," said Doctor Courtlandt, "I find you changed, it is true, from the merry school-girl you were

formerly, when a very pert and impudent boy used to come and visit you at his aunt's: he also is changed but like yourself, God be thanked, still retains his love of old friends and holds in his heart, as a sacred treasure, the recollections of those times you allude to."

"They are very far off, Doctor," said Miss Emberton, with a smile and a sigh.

"But very vivid to me, madam," replied the Doctor, "they were happy times—very happy. The memory of them even now when long years have gone by, each touching my forehead with a wrinkle, my hair with a snow flake, even now my recollections when they go back to the times we speak of, are full of pleasant regret."

"Is regret ever pleasant, Doctor?"

"Often—very often."

"How is that?"

"It is very simple. We naturally regret all that splendor and joy which has flown away; the present is not equal to the bright past in any thing;—from our proclivity to love the 'good old times,' whether those times were good or not. That is human; therefore we ever sigh for them back again. But with the regret is mingled the consciousness of having once been happy—grand and most affecting recollection!—and so the regret is often swallowed up in joyful satisfaction."

"*C'est vrai!*" said Monsieur Pantoufle, wisely and thoughtfully shaking his head.

The lady smiled.

"Well, I confess there is very often some such feeling in my own mind," she said, "but I am still very child-like in my character—though I am becoming an old woman—which probably accounts for it."

"Child-like, madam? I find you paying yourself a very high compliment."

"How so?"

"The child character is my beau ideal—the most perfect."

"'Tis true, 'tis true," said Monsieur Pantoufle, mournfully shaking his head; "*hélas!*"

"Why, Doctor?" asked Miss Emberton.

"Because it is the purest. Carping men may exhaust their rhetoric in scoffing at the idea, but my experience tells me that the child-mind, unfettered as it is with conventionality and custom, unobscured and unaffected by worldly fallacy, that this first virgin tablet takes truer as well as more beautiful impressions than the adult mind. Thus I have ever loved children."

"There is much truth in what you say, Doctor; I think I should like to possess some enchanter's wand for a moment. I would transport myself back to Mrs. Courtlandt's in Martinsburg, and for a time live again in the midst of my child-friends there as I used to. But they have grown up, married, and I believe quite forgotten me; the world is real, not enchanted."

"Alas," said the Doctor, "no truer word could be spoken. But the other day I visited that very house—collecting my memories, you will understand, madam," said the Doctor, smiling.

"The old school?"

"Yes; and I stood in the room just where I so often stood in the old days listening to the merry laughter of the girls. I thought I heard it again ringing joyfully through the passages and out under the broad garden trees! I was mistaken; it was all gone, and the place only made me melancholy."

"So you came away sighing, Doctor, did you?" asked Miss Emberton, with a languid smile.

"No, no. For one memory rescued me from this prison house of tears," said Doctor Courtlandt, laughing.

"What memory?"

"Do you recall the occasion of Mrs. ——'s exhibition, or examination, rather?"

"Perfectly."

"When I played *Romeo* you recollect, madam?"

"Yes—yes!"

"Well I recollected, as I stood there in the old room, that foolish act of mine—the note I gave you."

The doctor and the lady both laughed.

"When we were dancing the minuet?" she said, "oh yes, I recollect perfectly."

"So now, madam; there is one of those pleasant regrets I spoke of."

"True it is such."

"I have my *Romeo* coat still," said the Doctor.

"What a curiosity!"

"A curiosity indeed; and how singular that Monsieur Pantoufle should be here now so long after, just as we are speaking of those times. That was his coat, my dear madam."

"Oh, I recollect; you seem to have forgotten the 'subscription' you proposed!"

The Doctor laughed heartily; and after some more pleasant conversation arose to take his leave.

"I hope I shall have the pleasure of seeing your sister and yourself at the Lock upon Friday," he said to the young man, "some friends come to dine with me."

"With great pleasure, Doctor, should I be well enough. Call again when you find it convenient: we should not neglect old friends."

Twenty years before the Doctor would have made his departure glitter with a speech replete with gallantry; but time had affected him equally with Monsieur Pantoufle. He therefore, simply bowed, and requesting Monsieur Pantoufle to accompany the party, wrapped his surtout around him, and returned homeward, thinking of Max.

CHAPTER XII.

HOW THE WORLD WAGS.

THE day for the dinner came, and Doctor Courtlandt stood at the door of his open, hospitable mansion, welcoming every one, as the vehicles of every description, from the large family coach to the light one-seated cur-ricule, deposited their freights before the door. The large carriages, roomy and luxuriously swung upon low-bending springs, were affected by the elderly ladies and those old "squires," to use the rustic designation, whose figures for long years nursed into corpulence and rotundity by generous viands and an ample modicum of sherry daily, would not consent to be incarcerated in narrower and less spacious vehicles. But the young gentlemen and ladies of the neighborhood, whose graces on the contrary courted observation, made their appearance on fine and spirited horses.

The Doctor was "all things to all men;" as perfectly agreeable with his ready jests to the young damsels, as he was with his cordial, neighborly bearing to the elderly ladies and gentlemen. For a time nothing was distinguishable but the incessant clatter of hoofs, and rattle of wheels, mingled with the hum of voices—then the "arrivals were complete" and the company was marshaled into the great dining-room, wherein that worthy old gentleman, father Von Horn, had often received his neighbors in long past years.

The return of Doctor Courtlandt and his son, was quite an event in the neighborhood—and to every one a pleasant event. The reader may have observed in former portions of this true chronicle, that Doctor Courtlandt

even as a wild, headstrong boy, managed to conciliate the goodwill of every person with whom he was thrown in contact. Throughout his life this was certainly a very observable circumstance; and now his return was hailed by all those friendly hearts as a most welcome event. There was much to interest a mere stranger even, in the noble looking gentleman now seated at the head of his broad board, and dispensing around him smiles and congratulations. Intellect had written in unmistakable characters its presence on the broad ample brow; and no one who had watched the expression of the firm lips—so infallibly the test of character—would have doubted that the heart which corresponded to this intellect was as noble and true.

Caroline and Alice were seated by Max and Mr. Robert Emberton: and Miss Emberton was the centre of attraction among the fair dames who bloomed in long rows on the right and left hand of the host. At the foot of the table—or more properly the head—sat Mrs. Courtlandt, the Rev. Mr. Courtlandt and his wife.

Alice observed with pain that Max ate scarcely at all; and this was only not observed by other persons from the fact that the young man was kept very busily talking: he and Doctor Courtlandt were the two centres to which a thousand questions tended, throughout the whole banquet. The young man seemed very listless and melancholy.

As for Caroline she was very busily engaged in laughing at Mr. Robert Emberton's *petit-maitre* airs, and at his attempts to talk French with Monsieur Pantoufle, who sat opposite them. Monsieur Pantoufle shrugged his shoulders at Mr. Robert Emberton's extraordinary *lingua Franca*—for this young gentleman had managed to mix up with his French both Italian and German, in which he fancied himself a proficient.

And so with the buzz of voices and the clatter of plates the dinner, like all mortal things, came to an end.

"Come, Mr. Emberton and you, cousin Max," said Caroline, "you must not stay drinking wine—you must come and walk with us on the hill side."

"Willingly," said Mr. Robert Emberton, "drinking is a great bore."

And accompanied by Max, Alice, Caroline and a number of young ladies, the unfortunate victim of ennui went forth.

The afternoon was beautiful; the sun just poised upon the western forest, hung in the rosy sky like a great shield on the flame-colored hangings woven of old by Ingebord, that "Child of kings;" the bright trees waved their long branches to the golden clouds; the fresh pure air brought the most becoming color to every cheek.

Max was silent and even gloomy. Alice looked at him timidly.

"Cousin Max, you do not seem well," she said, bashfully.

"I am very well," said the young man, sombre and mournful.

"You must not be low spirited."

"I am not."

And then after these abstracted words he turned away. Caroline's gay laugh rang out.

"And you pretend to say that you speak French, sir! upon my word! I have never heard a more singular dialect than that with which you were pleased to regale my ears at table."

"I did not address my French to you, Miss Caroline," said Mr. Robert Emberton, to whom these words were directed.

"Well address me now, and tell me if that sky is not beautiful?"

"Beautiful?"

"Yes, it is lovely. Look at the girls and the gentlemen yonder, how sentimentally they are grouped admiring it."

"They are young," said Mr. Emberton, yawning.

"Young? what do you mean?"

"Unsophisticated."

"Because they admire a beautiful sunset? How fine your taste is!"

"I don't pretend to have any."

"You have none, or you would admire those beautiful woods."

"You have harnessed that poor word *beautiful* too often. It will break down the next stage."

"Then lovely—the evening is lovely."

"There's nothing in it."

"Just listen. I think you and cousin Max are the dullest beaux I have had for an age."

Max, by a strong effort suppressed his gloom, and turning to the young girl whose bright glance flashed like an arrow to him:

"What did you say, cousin?" he asked, smiling sadly.

"I said you and Mr. Emberton were very bad company."

"Well," said Max, "I will endeavor to behave better. Come now, make me laugh, cousin Caroline. I am in one of my fits of dullness."

"He would not speak to *me*," thought Alice, "and turned away from me saying that he was not low spirited; plainly because he did not expect any pleasure in my society. Now he is very ready to talk to sister, and in five minutes will be laughing. Well, I hope she will make him laugh;" and mortified tears came into the young girl's eyes.

"Now, Miss Alice," said Mr. Emberton, offering his arm to the fair girl to help her over the steep rocks they were clambering, "I begin to feel in a better humor with you upon my arm. I confess I have been in a wretched humor all day—before I left home, understand; for by this time I should have done something dreadful, but

for Doctor Courtlandt's brilliant conversation and your pleasant society."

Alice glanced at Max and Caroline who were talking gayly—Caroline at least. Max seemed already to have thrown off much of his gloom.

"You are as much in earnest about uncle's 'brilliant conversation' as about my 'pleasant society,' I suppose, Mr. Emberton," the young girl said.

"Indeed," said Mr. Emberton bending down to her ear gallantly, and taking the opportunity to throw a glance upon Max and Caroline, "I was never more sincere in my life."

"Sincerity is your forte, you know."

"My forte?"

"I mean it is not."

"I am always sincere with you," said Mr. Emberton, tenderly.

"And I with you; for I always tell you your faults, you know."

"My faults?" said her companion, glancing at Caroline and her cousin.

"Yes," said Alice, with the same wandering of the eyes.

"Have I faults?"

"Yes, sir," said Alice, "and one of them is looking at other people when you are talking to a lady."

"Other people!"

"Yes, you were looking at sister and cousin Max while you were answering me; and scarcely knew what you were saying."

Mr. Emberton smiled.

"You were doing the same," he said.

"Well, if we are not society for each other—though you say mine is so pleasant," Alice replied, with some feeling and a perceptible tremor in her voice, "suppose we join them, sir."

"A quarrel on my hands, by Jove!" muttered Mr.

Emberton. "On my word, Miss Alice," he continued more seriously, "I had no intention of being guilty of discourtesy. I am exceedingly dull, I feel; and ask your pardon. Don't refuse it."

Alice smiled, and granted the wished for pardon; but insisted on joining the party. And so they approached.

"Oh, cousin Max has been giving me such a nice description of Italy and Rome!" cried Caroline.

"Has he?" said Alice in a low voice, "I could not get you to talk with me, cousin Max."

"I have talked very little," said Max, with a long look at Alice, "and indeed very prosily. You were much better employed."

"Flirting with Mr. Emberton," said Caroline, with an affected laugh, "oh fie, a preacher's daughter!"

Alice turned away to hide her tears, and with her companion approached a large rock which was covered with moss and afforded a delightful seat. They sat down—Robert Emberton bending over the young girl intent on removing all traces of ill-humor from her mind.

"There they go," said Caroline to Max, with a somewhat ironical look, "I am very glad you secured me from that fine gentleman, cousin Max, with his eternal talk of being *bored*—he is excessively disagreeable."

"Do you dislike him, cousin?"

"No," said Caroline, indifferently, "he will do very well in his way—he is very affected."

"Is he intelligent?" asked Max, looking at the person he alluded to.

"So-so—yes, I won't be insincere; quite intelligent, but the most ridiculous—"

"Do you like him?"

"No, not a bit."

"I thought he visited you and Alice very constantly. Does Alice like him?"

"I don't know, but it is plain he likes Alice," said the young girl, pouting.

"They seem to be admiring the sunset; see how beautiful. There is now just a very small remnant of the disc upon the horizon. There, it is gone."

"Yes, gone," said Caroline, with her eyes fixed on Alice and Mr. Robert Emberton, as they sat in friendly proximity side by side upon the beautiful moss-clad rock.

"There are no sunsets in the world equal to our mountain ones here," said Max, going through the same ceremony as his cousin.

"Not in Italy?" asked Caroline, absently.

"No—none as beautiful."

"I have heard so much of the Italian sunsets—are they not superb?"

"Yes, the sky is very fair."

"Very few clouds, I believe?" said Caroline, still absently, and feeling a very violent dislike for Mr. Robert Emberton who was fixing her sister's bracelet affectionately upon the beautiful arm.

"I observed none, scarcely," said Max, asking himself why he had not before observed how fond Alice was of Mr. Emberton, upon whom she was at that moment sweetly smiling.

Caroline burst into a merry laugh.

"You are not thinking of me that's plain, cousin Max," she said.

"Not thinking of you?"

"You are looking all the while at Alice, at least!"

"I believe we have both been looking in that direction," said the young man, smiling, "suppose we go and see what they are examining so attentively."

"With pleasure!" said Caroline, making a mock courtesy, and taking the offered arm with a laugh. It was a flower that Alice and Mr. Emberton were examining—one of those fair autumn flowers which glitter like stars all over our beautiful mountains.

"What is that?" asked Caroline taking it, with an ironical laugh, "what Shakspeare calls *Love-in-idleness*?"

"I profess my entire ignorance, Miss Caroline," said Mr. Robert Emberton, "I never studied botany;—it bored me."

"Oh, that is nothing extraordinary, sir," said Caroline, satirically, "botany does not monopolize the privilege."

"Now you are going to cut me up as usual, Miss Caroline. Really, Mr. Courtlandt will think me a most unfortunate individual."

"You are very fortunate I think, sir," said Max, "you are in good spirits and amuse cousin Alice. I can not."

"Oh, Cousin Max!" said Alice, reproachfully.

"I only mean that I am really very low-spirited and dull," said Max, grieved at the hurt expression of the little tender face, "Indeed I am always, and am a poor entertainer."

"You seemed to be entertaining Miss Caroline very agreeably, sir," said Mr. Emberton, "she always laughs *at* instead of *with* me."

Caroline, as if to verify this charge against her, burst into a merry laugh.

"Upon my word!" she cried, "I think we ought to have arranged differently. You, cousin Max, with Alice and I with Mr. Emberton; though I know I should have got the worst of the bargain."

"You flatter me: you are really too good to me," said Mr. Emberton, bowing ironically.

"Well, I will not undervalue you so much," said Caroline merrily, "for when I have bored, and bored, and bored you still more, perhaps I shall discover the vein of gold, now hidden. But come let us go back!"

And they all returned to the mansion. They found the company about to separate for their different homes, and soon in the joyous and gay clatter of those friendly voices they lost sight of the comedy of errors they had just enacted. The scene passed away like a momentary cloud floating across the sunlight—but still that scene

was more important to this history than a thousand dinners. We might have detailed for the amusement of our readers, the jests, the laughter, the merry speeches of the ladies in the drawing-room, of the elderly gentlemen over their wine when these fair ladies had departed for a time, but our duty was to abandon all this brilliant company and busy ourselves with the four personages whose phases of character, and changes of feeling must enter chiefly into this chronicle. This duty pointed to the most difficult of two matters: for it is mere pastime to catch idle momentary words and laughter, and note the footprints of the march of incident; but far more difficult to truthfully outline, even, the characters of human beings. The first is easy sport, the latter a very different matter.

This trifling scene was the means of developing clearly to their own eyes in those four hearts, a fact which hitherto they had not given thought to.

The company separated with many expressions of good will, and soon there was nothing in this large room, where so many voices had but now resounded, but silence.

The Doctor had been much grieved at Max's melancholy in the earlier part of the day. But when the young man returned from his walk with the fair girls his cousins, this melancholy had disappeared, and there was life again in his large blue eyes.

"Ah," murmured the astute observer of human nature, "the change has, God be thanked, commenced. What would they not deserve of me if they did away with his sombre thoughtfulness."

The Rev. Mr. Courtlandt and his wife with the young girls departed last.

"Good-by, uncle," said Caroline, "oh, I have had such a delightful day. Such pleasant company."

"Whose the most so, pray?"

"Yours of course—you're such a nice old fellow."

"Old indeed—at forty!"

"Well, 'young fellow,' then."

"I distrust your compliments, you witch; now I am quite sure you found Mr. Robert Emberton's society enough to occupy you for the whole day."

Caroline laughed ironically.

"No," she said, "he was 'bored' as usual."

"As usual?"

"He always is; but he says he will come and see us to-morrow or the next day, and not complain of dullness for once."

"And you, Alice—have you had an agreeable time?"

"Very agreeable, dear uncle," said the young girl, looking at Max.

Max smiled and sighed; the Doctor caught the sigh in its passage.

"Max," he said, "how has it been with you?"

"I am always in good spirits when I am with cousin Carry and cousin Alice."

"Oh," cried Caroline, "what a gallant speech Monsieur le Voyageur."

"And very sincere," said Max, looking at Alice, "that is its only merit."

"Well, now it strikes me," the Doctor said, laughing, "that you might be in good spirits oftener."

"How, sir?"

"The Parsonage is not far."

"Oh, I am going over to-morrow."

"Yes," said Alice with a bright smile, "cousin Max promised to bring me something—though I had to tease him for it."

"What sort of a something?"

"Oh, that's our secret, sir," said Alice, in her soft musical voice which was the very echo of tenderness and joy, "the secret which is known to three people is no secret, you know."

"I promised—" began Max.

"Now, cousin!" said Alice, smiling, "that will spoil all."

"Well, I won't ask," Doctor Courtlandt said. "Max may take you what he chooses to take you; but you shall take away a kiss from me. Come, both!—but one at a time. Good! now there is brother waiting for you, and your mother smiling at you."

"*Au revoir!*" said Caroline, laughing merrily and making a mock courtesy.

"Good-by, uncle. You must come and bring what you promised, cousin Max," said Alice; and so the last of the guests departed.

O

CHAPTER XIII.

ALICE'S SECRET.

ON the next morning Doctor Courtlandt rose with the sun, and opening his window to the fresh morning air, inhaled joyfully that breath of golden autumn so full of life and strength.

"Ah," he said, "I should be in the hills by this time! I feel my old warlike instincts revive; I am conscious of a deadly enmity to deer and turkeys. I should now be filling my chest with the full-flowing wind of the Sleepy Creek Mountain, yonder—I should be in the midst of those splendid woods hearing the merry leaves rustle instead of thus being a tardy sluggard here!"

And Doctor Courtlandt dressed with the ease and rapidity of an old traveler; and gay, light-hearted, ready to break his jokes upon any one who approached, descended to the breakfast room.

Max was already there bending over a portfolio which lay upon his knees. His long fair hair half covered his face, as he sat with his delicate profile turned to the door by which his father entered, and the red, cheerful light of the crackling twigs in the fire-place—only a handful, to dispel the morning chilliness—brightened his eyes, and mingled itself with the clear sunlight streaming through the window opening on the east.

The Doctor clapped him on the shoulder.

"What brought you down so soon, my boy? you are not generally so early a riser," said he, laughing.

Max raised his face; he was smiling.

"I could not bear to lie in bed on such a lovely morning, sir," he replied.

"Why, that is well said! Now suppose we go and look at the mountains. I was born in the mountains, and have all my life risen early to go and see the morning mist curl up from the streams."

"It is very beautiful," said Max, putting on his hat, and placing under his arm the portfolio.

"Oh, grand!" and with this joyful exclamation, Doctor Courtlandt, accompanied by his son, went out upon the mountain side.

"See," said he, "how fresh the trees and all are from their night's rest, so to speak. How still the air is; nothing is stirring but those small birds, and that hawk floating far up above the mountain upon his long wings. Observe the mist hanging above Meadow Branch—no trace of the Parsonage or any other house. Yes! upon my word! there it comes out! the sun is routing the mist—you have never seen any thing as pretty in Europe, my boy! and day is on us! with all the fresh vigor of youth and joy. That wind! hear how it floods the air with merry laughter! the trees are positively so much variegated cloth of gold! and the leaves dancing to the tinkling music! Ah! the air is full of it!"

Max stood rapt with the beauty of the fair October morning; and for the first time felt that autumn was not necessarily so sad. His eye sparkled, his cheeks filled with blood, and his eye drank in rapturously the whole beautiful landscape.

"Splendid; is it not?" said Doctor Courtlandt, "if I could only sketch this scene!"

"Here is my portfolio, sir."

"Do you ever draw now?"

"Very seldom; but I am determined some morning to make a sketch of the valley from this very spot."

In opening the portfolio, the young man's hand displaced a paper, which fell out on the grass. He picked it up, smiling.

"Here is something about the mountains, sir," he said.

"What—poetry? Heaven defend me!"

"Yes; and I had selected it for Alice."

"For Alice?"

"You recollect yesterday, when they went away, Alice said I had promised her something. My promise was to write for her some verses, and this was already written."

"About the mountains?"

"Here it is, sir; it was written on the Atlantic, years ago."

"How! when we were—"

"Going to Europe; yes, sir; it sounds low-spirited, and I was very much so at the time."

"But you are not now, my boy?" said Doctor Courtlandt, wistfully, taking the paper as he spoke.

"No, sir;" Max replied with a smile, "I believe I am getting hearty again. I feel very well indeed, and was laughing a little while ago at the excess of sentiment which produced those verses—when you found me in the breakfast-room, you know."

The verses were written in a plain, delicate hand, and ran as follows:

"The sunset died
In regal pomp and pride—
I should have died
Before I left my mountain side!

"Poor heart! I sighed,
Is happiness denied
To thee untried
Here on the quiet mountain side?

"The trees were dyed
In evening's crimson tide,
Rolled far and wide
Along the merry mountain side.

"This was my bride!
And what man shall deride
The daisy pied,
That blooms upon the mountain side?

"The red day died ;
With bitter tears I cried,
I should have died
Before I left my home,
My own dear mountain side!"

"Hum!" said the Doctor, critically, "the last verse seems to me redundant; but I have no doubt it will serve your purpose. Well, you are back to your mountain side! Don't write melancholy poetry any more, my boy."

"I never write, sir; and I am sure you would not have been annoyed with my scribbling this morning, but for the fact of our walk out here."

"No annoyance, my dear boy; pleasure—pleasure; but come, I see aunt yonder marshaling the turkeys, and now see! she beckons."

"Good-morning," said the old lady, who was counting the keys in her large key-basket, "why, Max, you look uncommonly well."

"And I have an excellent appetite, aunt," replied Max, laughing.

"Come, agreeable Mrs. Courtlandt," said the Doctor, "let us have some breakfast, if you please."

"It is ready, nephew."

And so they all entered and sat down to breakfast. Max, as he said, had an excellent appetite; and so overjoyed was the worthy Doctor at seeing his son thus recovering his strength, that they had no sooner risen from the table than he suggested a bout with the foils. Max went up stairs to procure them.

Just as he left the room a merry voice was heard at the door, crying, "Good-morning, good folks!" and Caroline ran in.

CHAPTER XIV.

A BOUT WITH FOILS.

"Good morning, uncle!" cried Caroline. "Aunt Courtlandt, how well you look after all the worry yesterday. I'm as glad to see you as if I had been away for a month instead of one night. I just got my riding dress, and rode over as the morning was so fine!"

"What a nice dress;" said Doctor Courtlandt, "ah, the young ladies of the present day are quite different from those of the old time. Silk is now the rule, then linsey was decidedly more fashionable."

"You speak as if you were as old as Methuselah."

"I'm past forty, Carry," replied the Doctor, "I am getting old."

"You shall not grow old; I will keep you young, uncle."

"How will you accomplish that?"

"By laughing at you."

"Laughing at me, indeed."

"You know then you will laugh back at me; and as long as people laugh they do not look old."

"Well, take off that riding skirt; that at least is no laughing matter."

"Certainly; where is my agreeable cousin Max?"

"Ah! there is the cat out of the bag. You did not come to see me—but Max."

"Fie! uncle; a young lady visit a gentleman! Indeed!"

And the young girl's pretty lip curled scornfully.

"Come, come," said the Doctor, "I foresee you will spend your indignation on the unfortunate Max—a kiss will make us good friends again."

"Who could quarrel with you, you nice old man!" cried Caroline, running to him.

"Take care! your skirt will trip you!" cried Mrs. Courtlandt.

The caution came too late;—Caroline, full of life and merriment—a merriment which reddened her cheeks and danced in her sparkling eyes, sprang forward so quickly, that the long skirt she wore got beneath her feet, and she fell forward—not into the arms of the nice old man, her uncle, but into those of Max, who at that moment entered with the foils and masks.

The Doctor burst into laughter.

"Bravo!" he cried, "there is a nice present Miss Caroline makes you, Max; thank her."

"Of herself, sir?" said the young man, with a pleasant laugh, "then I accept unconditionally."

Caroline laughed, and quickly extricated herself from her cousin's embrace.

"Thank you," she said; "it is Leap Year, but I have no intention of presenting myself to any body."

"Especially to such a dull fellow as myself," said Max.

"You are not dull, cousin: how could you be? a traveled gentleman, full of accomplishments, elegant graces; and then your bow—that is nonpareil."

"What a tongue, you little witch!" said the Doctor.

"And now you are about to exhibit your fencing graces, I suppose," said Caroline; "come, begin!"

Max smiled, and took his foil, without paying any attention to his cousin's raillery. The Doctor put on his mask, and bent his foil on the toe of his boot.

"Two to one on uncle!" cried Caroline, laughing and retreating from the glittering steel, which the Doctor, with the ease of a practiced swordsman, whirled around him—going through the motions of engaging and disengaging.

"Two to one—say you?" replied her uncle; "that were too much, unless you won."

"I declare, uncle, you are the smartest old gallant I have ever seen! Well, I'll bet cousin Max that you throw his sword out of his hand in half a minute."

"Take the bet, Max," said the Doctor.

"I am afraid you will, sir," Max replied, laughing.

"Bet—bet, nevertheless."

"What shall the bet be, cousin Carry?" asked the young man.

"Your hat against my riding-cap. You will look very nice riding back with me without your hat."

"Done," said Max, putting on his mask.

"*En garde!*" said Doctor Courtlandt; and Max placed himself in position.

"All fair now, uncle," said the young girl, laughing.

"I pledge you my honor I will try to make him lose. So take care of your weapon, Max."

Max grasped his foil with an experienced hand, and, throwing back his hair, fixed his eyes upon those of his father, and crossed his weapon. The two swords clashed, and half a dozen rapid passes ensued, in which neither were marked.

"I need not have chalked the button, sir," said the young man; "I can not touch you."

"Try again," said Caroline.

The weapons were again crossed; and after a rapid passage, in which the foils writhed around each other like glittering serpents, the young man was struck upon the breast.

"You are dead," said Doctor Courtlandt; "see, Max, on your heart! The mark is perfectly plain. You are a dead man!"

"I never felt better in my life," replied Max, laughing.

"Now for the bet," said Caroline.

"Ah! I forgot," said the Doctor, taking his place.

The weapons crossed a third time; and after a dozen rapid passes the young man, by a quick turn of the wrist,

sent Doctor Courtlandt's foil flying to the other side of the room.

"Oh, how nice!" cried Caroline.

"Faith!" said Doctor Courtlandt, rubbing his arm, "you have a good wrist, Max."

"And I have won your cap, cousin Caroline," the young man said.

"But you would not be so ungallant as to take it?"

"Indeed I will: I would have had great success in pleading for *my* hat, had *you* won."

"Well, there it is, sir; I take back all I said about your gallantry and accomplishments."

"I appeal from Miss Courtlandt out of humor to Miss Courtlandt pleased," said Max, laughing, and taking the little cap with its black feather.

"That is right, Max," said the Doctor; "compel her to comply with the conditions of the bet."

"Will you try another pass, sir?"

"No, thank you; by no means; I have enough. My arm is still stunned to the very elbow. I should have killed you, but you have, in reality, disabled me. You profited by La Force's teaching, faith."

"Fencing was my only amusement, sir, you know."

"Yes, yes—you have, however, turned your science to some profit. A nice cap you have lost, Carry, by your betting mania."

"Dear old man! I do not regret it—for it was for your sake. Now I must go back; I just galloped over, and had no idea I should be so much amused."

"Max, do you go over this morning?" asked Doctor Courtlandt.

"Yes, sir; I have just ordered my horse, and whenever cousin Carry is ready, I am."

"I am ready now; but poor me, what am I to do without my cap?"

"The best you can."

"Well, Mr. Uncourtly, come; I don't care for any. My curls are not so unbecoming, and the sun is not hot enough to freckle my face. Good-by, dear uncle—and you, aunt, come over as soon as you can."

And with these words the young girl, holding up her long skirt, went out, followed by Max, who bore in his hand the riding-cap.

"Please give it to me," said Caroline, as she took her seat in the saddle.

"That depends upon your behavior, cousin Caroline," said Max.

"What! on the ride?"

"Yes; so take care!"

"Keep it then!" cried the young girl, shaking back her long curls, and rapidly setting forward toward the Parsonage. Max followed, and took his place at her side in excellent spirits, and anticipating a delightful visit.

A quarter of a mile from the house, they met Mr. Robert Emberton, riding very languidly toward Doctor Courtlandt's. He saluted the young lady with negligent politeness, and drew up.

"Where are you going?" asked Caroline.

"To Doctor Courtlandt's—then to the Parsonage, to see Miss Alice," said Mr. Emberton, laconically.

"What, pray, takes you to uncle's?"

"My horse," said Mr. Emberton; "and in addition to that execrable animal, a note from that amiable sister of mine, Josephine."

And Mr. Emberton was about to pass on.

"Stop," said Caroline, "there is one of the Lock servants going home; he will take it."

Mr. Emberton hesitated.

"I had promised myself a pleasant talk with Doctor Courtlandt—most entertaining gentleman I have ever known—" he said, "but he is probably busy to-day.

Therefore," added Mr. Emberton quickly, lest Max should have an opportunity of assuring him that his father was at leisure, "I will continue on my way to the Parsonage. Don't let me stop you."

Caroline, after some hesitation, agreed to laugh at this speech; and Mr. Emberton delivered the note to the servant who was passing on a wagon horse.

"You may join us if you choose," said Caroline, "or ride alone."

"Well, I'll go with you," said Mr. Emberton.

And they all continued their way to the Parsonage.

CHAPTER XV.

THE BRACELET AND THE NOTE.

DOCTOR COURTLANDT stood watching Max and Caroline as long as they were in sight, with a well-pleased smile upon his thoughtful face.

“She would make him a most excellent wife,” he murmured, “but I do not think they are at all more attached to each other than cousins, who are friends, are usually. But the one great fact which remains, is this—Max is better, stronger, gayer, more lively. He no longer mopes, though his sadness has not entirely left him, and he still thinks too much. Certainly that was a happy day in Italy when I said to myself, ‘All this is worse than idle—let us go back again to Virginia.’ Here has been a greater change than I could have hoped in so short a time; and, by my faith, I believe these two young girls have been the means. How gay and sincere a spirit is Caroline’s—how cheerful and tender Alice’s; they are paragons of sincerity and true-heartedness withal—and such mere children. Come! can I not be content with my young cavalier, but I must be coveting my neighbors’ children? What a glorious fellow Max would be were his spirits once back again; what a wrist he has; well, we will trust to time, and new scenes.

“New scenes! that cap of Caroline’s brought to me some very old scenes;” and the Doctor smiled thoughtfully; “it resembles exactly my Romeo cap, in former times.”

The Doctor’s brow clouded over, and he sighed. That poor heart had never entirely recovered from its wound. Her image still remained shrined in his memory and heart.

“And my Romeo coat? Where is that?” he said,

with a mournful smile. . "Ah, I recollect; I will go and look at it, even if it throws me back once more to those times. Should I avoid these tender memories? No—no! a thousand times!"

And going to his chamber the Doctor opened a closet, and after some time spent in searching, drew forth the coat which he had worn on that night, whose events we have chronicled in former pages of this history.

"Twenty-five years nearly," he murmured; "that is a long time. Ah! how all that past revives for me! There again is the crowd; there the bright faces, the good true-hearted friends, the old-fashioned dresses, the trembling form of Barry!"

The Doctor mused long with dreamy eyes—all the past seemed to defile before him with its bright faces and gay scenes. Then sighing deeply, he took the coat and was about to fold it again, and put it away, when he felt something in the pocket. He drew this something out; it was a small red sandal-wood bracelet, such as are worn by girls.

For a moment he sat gazing at the bracelet in astonishment; but suddenly his eyes lighted up with merriment, and the old odd smile passed over his lips.

"Who would have thought it!" he said, "this bracelet has actually been in this pocket for nearly twenty-five years. It was Josephine's! I remember now distinctly how I obtained it on the evening I played Romeo. We were coming out together, and the young lady complimented me upon my style of playing it. 'The good opinion of no one pleases me so much,' I said. What a joyous heart beat in my bosom then! And then Josephine, that bright child timidly gave me this! 'to make me her knight,' she said!"

The Doctor mused and smiled, holding the bracelet absently, his eyes fixed on the carpet.

"Ah! those days are gone;" he murmured, "youth is so short, manhood comes so soon; ere long old age will chill me wholly. My strength even now is waning, and

time, after destroying my heart and memory, will also annihilate my existence. Oh, merciful Father! let me not lose that past—may I never lose the memory of my childhood and my boyhood! May those who have it in their power to revive those memories, do so—in whatever manner; whether by a word, a picture, a piece of music, or—”

“A note, sir,” said a voice behind the Doctor, “a note from Miss Emberton.”

The Doctor was struck with this apposite continuation of his sentence; he took the note with a smile, opened it, and read:

“Miss Josephine Emberton is almost ashamed to trespass on the time and kindness of Doctor Courtlandt, especially so short a time after his arrival. But presuming, on her long acquaintance, she asks as a favor that he will call on her some time to-day, if it should be perfectly convenient, assuring him that he will be able to assist her in a very annoying matter.”

“Away with dreams; here is the waking existence! away with imagination; here is reality!” exclaimed Doctor Courtlandt. And putting the bracelet in his pocket, after carefully folding up and restoring to its place the Romeo coat, he descended. Mrs. Courtlandt met him.

“I must go to see Miss Emberton by particular request, aunt,” he said, “here is her note. My farm business must wait.”

And leaving the note with Mrs. Courtlandt, he went and ordered his horse. In a quarter of an hour he was in the saddle, and on his way to Miss Emberton’s.

He returned in the afternoon, and on again seeing Mrs. Courtlandt, smiled.

“What was the business—the ‘annoying matter,’ I mean, nephew?” asked the old lady.

“Guess.”

“I can not.”

“To tell her if a man who offered himself for an overseer, was capable or not.”

"Could not her brother?"

"Oh; Mr. Robert has not studied farming; I have, you know—but still, Miss Emberton should have sent for you; you are a much better one than myself."

"Pshaw!"

"But that was not the most striking part of the affair."

"What do you mean?"

"Can you imagine who the man was who desired to fill the position of overseer at the Glades?"

"No; I never could guess."

"Mr. Huddleshingle."

"What! he who in old times—whom Brother Jacob—"

"Yes—the very same!"

"And how did you arrange it; is *he* Miss Emberton's overseer?"

"No, no—upon seeing me he became very embarrassed and angry, and refused to live at the Glades, saying he had changed his mind. He will go to the West, he says, to-morrow; and I feel little commiseration for him. He never was an honest man."

"That was a most scandalous trick of his."

"Yes, yes, aunt; but this entails on me the discovery of another overseer for Miss Emberton. Well, I must go and consult her on the subject. She is a most agreeable person, aunt," said the Doctor, thoughtfully, "and less changed than I imagined."

"I always told you Josephine was an excellent girl. She is little altered in character, though much more sedate."

"I returned some of her property—an old bracelet; and we had a very hearty old time laugh. Really she is a very agreeable woman, excellent Mrs. Courtlandt! But where is Max?"

"There he is coming," said Mrs. Courtlandt.

CHAPTER XVI.

COMFORT AND HELP TO THE WEAK-HEARTED.

MAX came in looking ill-humored and melancholy : but there was in this expression of disquietude nothing resembling his habitual sombre and listless apathy. Plainly his moodiness was the result of some direct tangible circumstance which had lately occurred ; and that, the watchful eye of Doctor Courtlandt discerned as usual at the first glance. Thus the young man's low spirits did not afflict him in the least ; very evidently it did not lie very deep beneath the surface, and thus would easily pass away.

Max saluted his father and aunt, and after a few listless words again put on his hat, and carelessly walked out upon the hill. He bent his way to the spot where they had wandered along on that beautiful evening—himself his cousins, and Mr. Robert Emberton—and reaching the moss-covered rock upon which Alice and her companion had seated themselves, stopped moodily. The evening was very fine ; the sun, just about to set, filled the air with its warm rosy light, and the whole universe seemed to be at rest. The perfume of the autumn leaves floated hither and thither borne along by the soft breeze, and there was in every feature of the fair landscape, veiled as it was by the slight haze, that thoughtful, melancholy grace, which inclines the heart and memory to dreamy reverie.

The young man seated himself upon the rock where Alice had sat, and fell into this dreamy species of reverie. But there was little inclination for pleasant thought in his mind. That visit from which he had anticipated so much delight, had by one of those unlucky circumstances

which seem to spring up in the path of all men like an adverse fate, been turned into a bitter trial. He had gone from home on that morning, happy, joyful, full of an "unaccustomed spirit," which had "lifted him above the ground with cheerful thoughts." Alice, he said to himself, would be there to meet him, and in her dear company he would spend a long happy day, in the bright sunshine, wandering in search of flowers, directing his steps to every pretty knoll and forest glade, drinking in the music of her voice, the soft light of her tender thoughtful eyes.

All this the young man had promised himself, and all this had been reversed by the simple presence of Mr. Robert Emberton, who like a Satan entered his Paradise and threw every thing into confusion.

Mr. Emberton throughout the whole day—Max reflected with bitter enmity—had attached himself to Alice, and this on the avowed ground that Caroline had quarreled with him, and for the time had declined to accept his overtures of friendship. That this was all a pretense on Mr. Emberton's part, merely a ruse to cover his preference for Alice, was perfectly plain to the young man; and this view was completely substantiated by the simple fact that Caroline had plainly not "fallen out" with Mr. Emberton. He, Max, had attached himself perforce to that young lady, and in consequence a drama was enacted, of which the former scene upon the spot he now occupied was but the rehearsal; a drama full of mistakes, misunderstandings, explanations, and complaints. So the day passed, and four persons who undeniably took pleasure in each other's society, had separated with ill-concealed bad-humor.

It was perfectly plain to the young man that Alice did not care for him, whether she felt a very lively affection for Mr. Emberton, or not. This possibility made Max at the same time wrathful and wretched. If such *were* the case what right had he to complain, he asked himself.

If Alice preferred the society of Mr. Emberton to his own, was not such a preference perfectly proper and rational? What was he, with his melancholy face and abstracted manner, the young man thought—his proud lip curling sorrowfully—that the young girl should abandon for his society so very elegant a gentleman—so full of amusing anecdote, and sparkling repartee, so easy, graceful, so calculated to please the taste of women with his pleasant humor!

The consequence of this train of thought was that gradually the young man's mind—like a cup held beneath a rock, dripping with brackish water—filled with harsh and poisoned thoughts. Anger, jealousy, love, chased each other incessantly through his moody brain, and wrapped in this reverie so full of anguish, he lost sight of the fair scene around him, as completely as if it had no real existence; his feverish eyes fixed alone on the scenes his brain had conjured up.

Suddenly he felt a hand upon his shoulder; and turning round, saw his father who had approached without his perceiving it, so profoundly had he been absorbed in this bitter and agitating reverie.

"You are melancholy, my child," said Doctor Courtlandt, tenderly, "come, drive away these thoughts which follow you like hounds; yield to them and they will tear you down and kill you."

The young man, troubled and gloomy, made no reply.

"I do not ask you the occasion of your melancholy," continued the Doctor, "but I offer you a medicine which will prove a panacea, whatever your malady may be. Plainly something annoys and agitates you. Well, take my advice, and banish this something from your mind."

"I can not, sir;—I confess I am annoyed," the young man added, in a low voice, "more than annoyed."

"Well, rid yourself of this annoyance; for you can. Youth is so credulous, so eager in every thing; all

things loom large and threatening through the mist of inexperience. The shadows—long and enormous, it is true, but shadows still—are, in your eyes, giants armed with wrath and destruction. Laugh at them! laugh at your annoyances! they are but shadows.”

“Yes, sir,” murmured Max, “shadows—for they darken my heart.”

“My son,” said Doctor Courtlandt, taking the young man’s arm and pointing to the setting sun, “what see you there?”

“Sunset, sir—night is coming.”

“Nothing more?”

“Darkness and wind.”

“More, more is coming, Max, than darkness and cold, and the chill biting wind! The morning also comes!—the morning full of warmth, and light, and joy; filled with the music of gay birds, instinct with hope and happiness! You believe as much from *faith*, since you see no trace now of any such thing; well, bring your faith to bear upon the world! If God obscures the heart with shadows, He can also again illuminate it with joy; if you are unhappy, you may still be very happy. I have never yet despaired; and because I have seen in every event of my checkered life the hand of God. He does every thing for the best, and lets no sparrow fall unheeded. Remember that! The misery of His poor creatures here is not pleasing to that merciful and omnipotent God; enough! remember this, my child! Let us return.”

And accompanied by his son Doctor Courtlandt returned to the house.

CHAPTER XVII.

BY THE FIRESIDE.

THE autumn passed with all its joyful splendor and its dreamy beauty ; its singing birds, and many-colored forests, and its tender flowers glittering like jewels in the crevices between mossy rocks, and on the sunny hillsides. The winter wind had come ; and it sighed mournfully through the tall bare trees which bent before it now—so stormy was it—but then sprang up again like giants, and catching it in their gaunt hands, made it sue loud for mercy. Ah ! very unlike those soft breezes, were these stormy winter blasts, which had dispelled with a single breath, the tender haze of autumn from the woods and hills. They rolled like thunder through the lofty pines, or like a great organ peal—so “musical” was this “discord ;” so “sweet” this “thunder” of the winter wind.

Then the sky became obscured as if some enormous flock of wild pigeons, such as once were wont to pass here in Virginia, were flying over the mountain land ; then one morning when the mountaineers arose, they saw pass by their windows myriads of downy flakes, which any one of imaginative temperament might have said, were in truth the feathers, soft and very white, of those flying pigeon-nations, scattered from those mid-air-flying-breasts, by the great stormy artillery of Heaven.

The autumn was, thus, dead ; wild geese no longer were seen flying southward far up in the clouds, from which their faint cry floats so clearly to the ear ; the carol of the robin was no longer heard ; the flowers had perished, even the golden-rod, last lingerer on the hills ;—in one word, winter had set in in earnest, there in the mountain-

land, and one of those good, honest, old-time snows, which scorned to lie less than a foot or two in depth, now wrapped the whole landscape in its bridal veil.

In the houses, diligent preparation had been made to meet the enemy; and every where he was routed by blazing wood fires, and by furs such as fair ladies wrap themselves in, when the merry sleigh-bells tinkle at the door. But more than all did the cold dismal winter night yield up its power for evil before the merry laughter of the happy-hearted children in the long evenings playing their thousand games—as “Blind man’s buff,” “’Tis oats, peas, beans, and barley grow,” and many others—by the bright, roaring fire. At the houses where these scenes were enacted, this merry laughter heard, the grim old Winter dared not show his nose, but peeping through the window furtively, passed on slowly, otherwhither!

We have thought it unnecessary to chronicle all the sayings and doings of the personages of this brief history; since the few scenes we have attempted to trace, have we hope, served to indicate sufficiently for the purposes of the narrative up to the present moment, the characters and surroundings of those personages.

Doctor Courtlandt had become now quite a regular visitor at the Glades, and indeed Miss Emberton had found the little whist parties, which were gotten up by him for her amusement, a very acceptable substitute for the usual listless “reading aloud” of her brother, in the long winter evenings. Mr. Robert Emberton cherished for his sister a very devoted affection, but reading he considered a great bore—much more, reading aloud. Doctor Courtlandt’s whist arrangement, therefore, met with the hearty approbation of both the brother and sister; and Mr. Emberton’s opinion of the elegant traveled gentleman, spurred by self-interest, vastly increased. He had, however, deferred in all things to Doctor Courtlandt, from the first moment of their acquaintance. M. Pantoufle even,

now domiciled at the Glades, gained a new interest from his former acquaintance with such a man.

At the Parsonage, Mr. Robert Emberton and Mr. Max Courtlandt were very constant visitors. The Comedy of Errors had been repeated so often, that it might have been justly considered a great favorite with the actors and the audience—on this occasion, one and the same. The young men often drove over to ride the ladies out in their sleighs; and this tacit rivalry had in a great degree served to remove Mr. Emberton's listlessness, and Max's melancholy.

Thus more than a month had passed rapidly, and Christmas began to hint of its approach, in the diligent attention paid by Mrs. Courtlandt to her larder, in the busy employment of the young girls on their various "Christmas gifts" to be—but more than all in the joyful anticipation plain in every eye.

The sunshine sparkling on the snow, was not half as brilliant as those joyful eyes.

CHAPTER XVIII.

COMEDY OF ERRORS: ACT V.

ONE fine morning two gayly caparisoned sleighs were standing before the door of the Parsonage, the horses of which tossed their heads impatiently, and spurned with their shaggy-fetlocked feet, the glittering snow. At every movement of their heads, the sleigh-bells attached to their harness gave out a merry jingling; at each pawing with their impatient feet, the snow flew around like a cloud of pearly powder.

Within, in the comfortable dining-room, roared cheerfully a huge wood fire, and round this fire were grouped, the old mountaineer, Mrs. Courtlandt (her husband was absent on a pastoral visit), Alice, and Caroline.

The young girls were wrapping themselves up in that mountain of shawls, and furs, and comforts, which young ladies will always continue to wrap themselves up in, to the end of the world. Caroline's merry face and dancing eyes were already half buried in a huge "nubia," and she overflowed with joy and laughter at every word which was uttered; Alice, more quiet and sedate, but full of anticipation, had already put on her wrapping.

Max and Mr. Robert Emberton, enveloped in their comfortable surtouts, leaned opposite each other against the mantle-piece.

Old hunter John looked at his grandchildren with affectionate pride.

"There you are," he said, his old face lit up with a happy smile, "all wrappin' up and fixin' yourselves as if you were going to the end of the world, instead of takin' a little jaunt to town! Cheeks as red as roses, I declare."

"Thank you for the compliment, grandfather," said Alice, demurely.

"I'm a poor hand at payin' compliments," said the old mountaineer, smiling. "When I was a youngster I did a deal of it, though; and I always found it best to pile 'em up pretty strong; the girls liked it all the better, if I don't disremember."

"Take warning, gentlemen!" cried Caroline, "there is a great deal of truth in what grandfather says."

"Yes!" said the old man, with a cheerful and thoughtful look, "I was a wild youngster, and many's the time I have spent the whole night shaking my heels to the music of the fiddle! The times then were most nigh uproarious, and the girls thought nothing of dancin' reels from sundown to sunrise. Merry times! merry times!" sighed the old man, "but all gone many a long day into the dust. They were like wild geese flyin' 'way off to the south, and never comin' back again; but I don't mourn over 'em. The Lord has been very good to me, and the old time was bright enough for me considerin'. Now I am mighty feeble, and most nigh gone to the other country; I begin to think the horn is goin' to sound for me 'fore long; and when it does sound, I'm in hopes I'll be able to say, 'Come, Lord Jesus, I've been a waitin' for you long.'"

Alice put her arms round the old man's neck, and kissed him.

"Don't be gloomy, dear grandfather," she said, with a tremor in her voice.

"I ain't gloomy, darlin'," the old man said, "no, no, I ain't gloomy! Why should I be gloomy? I might 'a been once. When I was a young strong man I lived my life like the rest, without thinking or caring for any thing but the fun and frolic of the time. My heart was full of blood, and I never knew what it was to be weary in the old days then—not if I hunted for days and nights togeth-

er, or was on the Injun trail 'way off in the backwoods—tho' the woods here were far enough back from the Ridge. If you had 'a told me then I was soon goin' to die and leave all the fine world, and have no more fine times a-dancin', and huntin', and frolickin' with the boys, you might 'a made me gloomy; it would be too much to expect the young people to give up their life, when they enjoy every thing so much, 'thout feelin' as if they would like to stay in the grand, beautiful world. No, no! the young love life, and the merciful God wisely made it so. They have nothing to do with sighin', and moanin', and thinkin' of the other world, though I don't deny they had better be givin' some thought to the time when the trumpet 'll sound. I might 'a felt gloomy then, if some body had 'a told me, 'Hunter John, you're goin' to die.' But now I look on this world as my tarryin' place for a little while only. My heart ain't got much blood in it, and my body's gettin' mighty poorly and feeble, and 'fore long, Alice dear, the time will come when the old man, your grandfather, will lay with his forefathers in the dust out o' which God made him. No, no!" the old man said cheerfully, "I'm a lookin' forward to the time with hope. The old weak body is nigh parted from the spirit, but the spirit don't want to stay. It's bound home, my darlin'."

Alice turned round to wipe her eyes.

"Go on now, children," said hunter John, "you are in the spring time. Daughter Sally a-knitting and smiling yonder is the summer, and I am the winter; but you are the spring; go, children."

"We are going to bring Saint Nic up, dear grandfather," said Caroline, "he's a good old man, and I know you'll like him."

"I never did see him yet," replied hunter John, smiling and kissing the young girl, "but I've heard of him oftentimes. Come, you're a-losin' time."

The girls kissed their mother, for young ladies never omit this ceremony in the presence of gentlemen, and ran to the door. Mr. Emberton's sleigh was the nearest, and Alice happened to reach the door before Caroline. The consequence was that the fifth act of the comedy of errors was inaugurated by Mr. Emberton's politely helping Alice into his sleigh. Not one of the party looked at any other member of it, and Max assisted Caroline into his sleigh without betraying his disappointment.

The heavy furs were thrown over them, and the two sleighs darted from the door like flashes of light, leaving behind them—as a ship leaves in her wake a trail of foam—a long “dying fall” of merry bell-chime music, on the frosty air.

CHAPTER XIX.

IN THE FIRST SLEIGH : OR PROPERLY THE SECOND.

Mr. Emberton and Alice, inasmuch as their sleigh was before that of Max and Caroline, took the lead ; and in a few moments—so rapid was their flight—the whole party arrived at and commenced the ascent of the Third Hill mountain, cutting through the heavy snow drifts, darting along on the hard frozen portions of the road, and every moment rising higher above the little valley which they could already, from their elevated position, overlook throughout its entire length and breadth.

The morning was bright and beautiful, but bracing and cold. The cool wind brought roses into the cheeks of the young girls, and the sunlight flooded their bright faces and laughing eyes with its full golden splendor.

Nestling under her furs, Caroline bent her eyes on the sleigh which glided rapidly, with its merry bells some distance on before them. She seemed to be somewhat annoyed at the unlucky mistake which had thrown her with her cousin. Not that Caroline disliked Max ; on the contrary she was very fond of him ; but only in that cousinly degree which is so far removed from any softer feeling. She had set her heart on riding with Mr. Emberton that day ; and had arranged an agreeable little series of teasings for his especial benefit ; and she was much disappointed at not being able to carry into effect these amiable intentions.

Max's eyes, if the truth must be told, were also fixed upon the sleigh in advance of them, much more frequently than upon the beautiful girl at his side. We know his secret at least—if that of other persons is not so

plain; and it must be confessed the young man had felt a very acute disappointment, at the accident which had prevented him from having the charming ride he had promised himself with Alice by his side. Mr. Emberton did not improve in his opinion, for his own agency in the matter.

"See what a glorious day, cousin Caroline," said Max, "here we are on the mountain top, and yonder is the North Mountain which we must also cross before we can swoop down on Martinsburg."

"Yes, yes, a lovely day!" cried Caroline, "but the wind is very cold."

"Oh, you must expect that—"

"In a sleigh ride, I know. I rather enjoy the cold."

"Wrap up well—fix the bear skin over your feet securely," said the young man, bending down and arranging the fur around the young girl's delicate ankles.

"Oh, they feel much warmer now! Thank you. How fast we are going!"

"Do you like sleigh bells?"

"Oh, I delight in them."

"And I; I think they are very merry."

"Very merry."

This entertaining dialogue was gone through with somewhat absently, the eyes of the interlocutors being fixed on the sleigh before them, which was flying like a swallow over the smooth descent of the mountain, its merry bells supplying pleasantly the place of echoes to their own.

"What music!" said Caroline.

"Delightful," replied Max.

"And at this rate we will swoop down on Martinsburg in a little while, as you say, cousin Max. You don't intend to carry off any body, do you?"

"How?"

"Hawks only, swoop—and hawks carry off chickens," said Caroline, philosophically.

"There are no chickens in town equal to our mountain ones," said Max, laughing.

"Come, Mr. Flatterer!"

"You are welcome to your portion, cousin Carry," said Max, absently.

"My small portion I know: for you can not deny that Alice takes up the greater part."

"Certainly, I deny it," said Max, slacking his rein and thereby increasing the speed of the already flying sleigh.

"Deny what?" said Caroline, looking mischievously at her cousin.

"Why, deny your accusation!" said Max, turning round with some embarrassment and fixing his eyes on his cousin's laughing face.

"What accusation?"

"The one you made."

"What was it?"

Max laughed and colored slightly with the consciousness that Caroline had fathomed his abstraction; Caroline burst out laughing.

"You were not thinking of me, cousin Max," she said, "you were thinking of Alice. Upon my word I believe you are in love with her, and now I come to think of it—to remember—to put this and that together—yes I'd take my oath you are in love with sister!" cried the young girl clapping her hands and laughing merrily.

Max blushed and turned away his head from his cousin.

"What folly!" he muttered.

"Do you deny it?"

"Certainly," said Max, smiling and regaining confidence.

"You ought to reply, 'Certainly I deny it,'" said Caroline, archly, "then you would use the very words you did just now, when I charged you with allowing

Alice a larger portion of your regard than myself, and when you did not hear me because you were so intently gazing at her in the sleigh before us!"

The young girl's laugh rang out loud and merry. Max adroitly turned the conversation.

"We are coming to the stream," said he, "I suppose the ice will bear us. It is quite deep, and I should not fancy giving you a wetting, my charming cousin."

"See! they are nearly on the ice."

"Heaven send it don't break!"

The sleigh of Mr. Emberton darted across the frozen stream like a sunbeam, throwing the light coating of snow which lay upon it, up in brilliant clouds. Just as they reached the other side, Mr. Robert Emberton, by a sudden movement pressed his lips to Alice's cheek.

This manœuvre was distinctly perceived by Max and Caroline, and without thinking of the conversation they had just had, they both uttered an indignant exclamation.

"It is too bad—really too bad!" said the young man, his brow flushing with anger.

"It is outrageous!" said Caroline.

"On what pretense!—"

"I should like to know!"

"For this person—" muttered Max, throwing a wrathful glance at Mr. Emberton's sleigh.

"For Alice—" said Caroline; and then stopped.

"It was not Alice's fault," said Max.

"It certainly was wrong in her to submit to it, cousin!" said Caroline.

"The wrong is from him—and he shall—"

The young man stopped, half from indignation, half from a feeling of propriety. Caroline was not the person to inform of his intention to call Mr. Emberton to account.

"It certainly is *not* a bridge!" said the young girl.

"And is it well settled that ladies are kissed on bridges?"

"When they are sleighing—at least they would not be justified in feeling offended."

"But this is not a bridge," said Max.

"I just said so," said Caroline.

"Why then—?"

"Certainly; why then?" And Caroline burst out laughing.

"You *are* in love with Alice," said she, merrily, "you are too indignant for any thing but a lover."

Max turned full upon his laughing cousin, and smiled satirically.

"You were quite as indignant as myself!" he said, with a meaning look. Caroline blushed to the roots of her hair.

"Come, dear cousin Carry," said Max, "don't let us quarrel; I never mean to hurt any one's feelings."

The young girl pouted, and replied:

"My feelings are not hurt."

"Then let us strain a point, and turn the ice into a bridge;" said Max, as they darted at full speed on the smooth surface, "a cousinly kiss to make friends!"

The frozen stream was crossed, and they fled onward like the wind.

CHAPTER XX.

IN THE SECOND SLEIGH: OR PROPERLY THE FIRST.

"MR. EMBERTON!" exclaimed Alice, indignantly, "you had no right to kiss me! and I request as a favor, sir, that you will not repeat the offense!"

Mr. Emberton looked surprised.

"Offense?" he said.

"Yes, sir! It was an offense!"

"You astonish me, Miss Alice—upon my word you do."

"If other young ladies permit gentlemen to take such liberties," replied the young girl, in an offended tone, "I, at least do not, sir."

"I was not aware that I had been guilty of taking liberties, Miss Alice," said Mr. Robert Emberton, tranquilly. "I looked upon the thing as a matter of course; quite mathematical! and I reduce the thing to an algebraic equation thus—a sleigh ride *plus* a young lady and a bridge, equal to one kiss; or more scientifically stated, $x + y = z$."

But seeing that these bantering words were very far from removing the young girl's ill-humor:

"Seriously speaking, Miss Alice," continued the young man, "I do not think my conduct—dreadful word that, always means mischief—has been so outrageous. Things are proper or improper as they are regarded in the light of abstract propriety, or conventional propriety. Now I maintain that convention—mighty and terrible *force* as the philosophers say—absolves me for my—conduct; yes, I repeat that terrible word; absolves me from any blame. And why?"

'The *why* is plain as way to Parish Church.'

as Jacques says; excuse me, I don't often quote Shakspeare—it bores me.”

“Mr. Emberton, you make every thing ridiculous.”

“Ridiculous?—every thing *is* ridiculous! Ridiculous? It is the essence of life—the staple of our being—ridiculousness—folly. I am exceedingly ridiculous myself, Miss Alice, confidentially speaking; don't mention it, since I would say as much only to you. But let me achieve by one bold stroke my pardon. I was about to say that convention, among many other things, has decided that a gentleman may, while waltzing, clasp a lady in his arms with fraternal affection, although he may be a perfect stranger to the said lady; it has also quite settled the propriety of kissing when bridges are crossed in sleighs—”

“It was not a bridge!” interrupted Alice, recovering from her ill-humor somewhat.

“Not a bridge! not a bridge which we crossed some moments since?” exclaimed Mr. Emberton, with well counterfeited surprise.

“Certainly not, sir!”

“It certainly was!”

“Thank you for contradicting me, sir,” said Alice.

“Contradicting you!”

“I said it was not a bridge—you say it is; pray is not that a contradiction, sir?”

“By no means.”

“Why not?”

“Because the spirit of contradiction is wanting,” replied Mr. Emberton, with ready and nice philosophic discrimination. “If you say, ‘I think it is not a bridge,’ and I reply with all deference, ‘I think, madam, it is an excellent one’—the simple question arises, which of us is mistaken. If you say, ‘It is a bridge,’ and I reply, ‘It is not,’ then there is some opening for a charge of contradiction—to be decided in due course by the duello. A bridge

is a very good thing to fight on—at Lodi, for instance. But I see I am boring you, and I begin to feel the approach of the foe myself, evoked, which is worse, by myself. I will therefore state that there formerly was a bridge at the point we crossed, and that bridge is no doubt now beneath the current. I believe you are not doing me the honor of listening very attentively to my profound philosophical remarks, Miss Alice,” continued Mr. Emberton, with great equanimity; “what are you looking at?”

“The mountains; they are very beautiful. Are they not?”

“Oh, charming,” replied Mr. Robert Emberton, well content that Alice had regained her good-humor, “not equal to Mont Blanc, however, I imagine.”

“No, I suppose not; Max could tell us.”

It now became Mr. Emberton’s turn for complaining.

“You are no doubt, somewhat disappointed at our arrangement to-day,” he said, “are you not?”

“What arrangement, pray?”

“Mr. Courtlandt with Miss Caroline, and yourself consequently bored by your humble servant?”

“I am never bored, sir,” said Alice, unconsciously turning round to look at Caroline and her cousin.

“Which is as much as to say you are not bored on this occasion, simply from the fact that the feeling is unknown to you, eh?”

“No, sir.”

“You are pleased with my society then?” asked Mr. Emberton with logical deduction.

“Delighted, sir!” said Alice, smiling.

“Consider yourself profoundly saluted,” said Mr. Emberton, inclining.

“And what do you say to my society?” asked Alice, laughing.

“It is charming, as it always is, my dear Miss Alice.”

“You are sure you would not prefer Caroline’s?”

"Oh, perfectly sure!"

"Caroline with her vivacity and delightful flow of spirits—"

"I like you best!"

"And so much prettier than I am," said Alice, looking wistfully back.

"Who could imagine such a thing?"

"Then," said Alice, "*you* can not complain of the 'arrangement?'"

"No, no; but you can. There is that elegant young traveled gentleman, Mr. Courtlandt, whom you have missed; your cousin too—cousins are so agreeable, you know," said Mr. Emberton with some gloom. "He could tell you, as you said, all about Mount Blanc and Italy."

"He does not talk much."

"He seems to be tolerably well engaged in conversation now," muttered Mr. Emberton.

"He is fond of cousin Caroline," said Alice, in the same tone.

"Yes?" said Mr. Emberton, frowning like Bombastes Furioso.

"And she of him," said Alice.

"No!" exclaimed Mr. Emberton.

"Indeed I am in earnest—of course I mean Carry thinks him agreeable."

"She thinks me very disagreeable."

"And Max thinks as much of me," said Alice, turning away her head.

Mr. Emberton suddenly remembered himself, and again assumed his languid *petit maître* manner.

"Likes and dislikes are a great bore," he yawned. "The only good thing in life is a fast horse; you *do* feel then as if you had blood in your veins. A spanker, eh?" continued Mr. Emberton, languidly pointing to his flying animal.

"Oh, certainly," said Alice.

CHAPTER XXI.

BUYING CHRISTMAS-GIFTS.

THE North Mountain was passed—that giant reposing at full length upon the margin of the pretty stream, murmuring over such beautiful mossy rocks in its pilgrimage to the Potomac—a huge bulk unmoved by wars or rumors of wars, unaffected by the changes in all human things, indifferent equally to the snows of winter falling on his brow, and summer sunlight flooding with its joyful radiance all his supine length—ever silent and uncomplaining, ever patiently biding his time, through pleasant days when birds sing merrily in the blue mid air above, through winter nights when the chill wind sighs through the evergreens, bowing their lofty heads in wonder at its tidings of far distant lands!

A moment's pause on the high-raised summit, to gaze upon the wide Lowland, wrapped in its bridal garment and flashing in the sunlight, and the sleighs sped on. They passed down the steep road carefully, fled by the old Tuscarora meeting-house, whose walls, could they speak, might relate to the present generation many wondrous narratives of the olden time, and so with merrily tinkling bells, ran like bright dragon flies, stripped of their obscuring mail and darting like light-flashes through the sunlight, into the bustling town.

Christmas was coming in Martinsburg also. At the rumor of Saint Nicholas's expected arrival—not by the cars, however, be it understood—the whole town had come forth to look for him; as when a great man is expected daily, the whole community are abroad to welcome him.

The stores were decked out in their gayest stuffs ; in every window silks and velvets, and tempting jewelry, for Christmas presents, caught the eye ; and every street was full of joyful wayfarers—holiday-looking young gentlemen—and gayly dressed ladies, and rejoicing children—going the rounds to look at the myriad of pretty things and purchase their presents for the coming Christmas night.

Conspicuous among these handsomely decorated stores was that of our old acquaintance, Mr. Barlow ; that Mr. Barlow who had promised faithfully on no account to sell the Romeo coat to any one but Max, in the old times, merry and long ago. He was still the obliging and worthy gentleman he had proved himself on that occasion ; full of very cheerful smiles, and ready to unroll for all who entered his broad door, his various attractive cloths and silks and velvets.

The young girls stopped first before his door ; and the gallantry of their cavaliers was quite obscured by that of Mr. Barlow, who assisted them to the broad, well-matted door step with profound and most engaging courtesy.

“ Good-morning, Mr. Barlow,” cried Caroline, “ how many pretty things you have ! Please show me that velvet.”

Mr. Barlow unrolled it.

The velvet was such as Caroline wanted, and she purchased enough for her Christmas gift to her mother ; then a large bundle of warm worsted for comforts ; these were intended for her father and grandfather.

“ Velvet ? What is that for, my dear Miss Caroline ?” asked Mr. Robert Emberton, languidly.

“ For a present, sir,” said Caroline.

“ Ah, yes ! really now that did not occur to me. And that thread ?”

“ What thread ?”

“ In your hand.”

“ It is not thread ; it is worsted.”

“ Worsted—really ! and what do you purpose making of that worsted ?”

"Making use of it," said Caroline.

"No!" said Mr. Emberton.

"Now, Mr. Barlow," continued Caroline, "please show me some pearl-colored cloth, very fine but thick and warm."

Mr. Barlow took down a roll.

Caroline bent over and whispered to him, inquiringly.

"Oh, yes; quite enough," said Mr. Barlow, smiling with a look of perfect intelligence, "will you have that much?"

"If you please."

"How much?" said Mr. Emberton, turning round, "and what is it?"

"It is cloth—pearl-colored—you may see for yourself," said Caroline, indifferently.

"And what is it for, pray," continued Mr. Emberton, yawning, "presents or use?"

"Both, sir," said Caroline.

"For whom?"

"That is my secret."

"A gentleman?"

"Yes—a gentleman," said Caroline, laughing and blushing slightly.

Mr. Emberton's manner lost a little of its languor, and he glanced quickly at Max. That gentleman had on, under his surtout, a complete suit of pearl colored cloth, whose color matched precisely that which had just been purchased by Caroline. His hat alone was black, and it was perfectly plain to Mr. Emberton that the cloth now selected by his cousin was to be made into a cap to suit the rest. This view was farther confirmed by the purchase on Caroline's part of ribbons, pearl buttons, etc., etc. such as were needed for the purpose.

Mr. Emberton became jealous and gloomy, and from time to time cast ill-humored glances at both Max and Caroline.

Let us now see how Alice had got on with her purchases at the other end of the counter, where a polite shopman—overwhelmed and confounded by her soft voice

and the tender beauty of her little face—outdid himself in the rapidity with which he complied with her demands.

Alice commenced as Caroline had done, by purchasing—with the greater part of her money—those things which were destined to form presents for her mother, father, and grandfather. These she selected with great care, and had wrapped up in a separate bundle.

“Grandfather will be pleased I know, cousin Max,” said the young girl, “with what I have for him this time. Now I must not neglect my other friends.”

Max, looking tenderly but anxiously at his cousin, made no reply.

Alice said something to the shopman in a low tone which Max did not catch; and the overwhelmed and confounded knight of the yard-stick—the most gallant and disinterested of men—hurried to obey. He took down a roll of silk.

“Yes, that is very pretty.”

“Here is the price, Miss—it is not dear, Miss—”

“No—not at all.”

“But we can sell it to you cheaper—you are our regular customers, Miss.”

“Thank you, sir; please cut me off enough for the pattern.”

“What is that, cousin Alice?” asked Max, taking up the handsome piece of stuff.

“Silk,” said Alice, smiling.

“I know it is silk; but what for? A present?”

“Yes—a present,” said Alice, blushing like a rose.

“For whom, may I ask?”

“Yes; you may ask! though that answer is far more like sister, who is so merry, than myself—you know I am so quiet,” replied Alice, with a sparkle of her soft merry eyes.

The polite shopman heaved a deep sigh—he was a captive forever.

“You mean I may ask, but that you will not tell me,” said Max.

"Yes; I can not tell you," said Alice.

"At least you can tell me what is to be made of this handsome silk."

"No, indeed I can not."

"Why?"

"That would be half of the joke, you know," replied Alice, her lovely face lit up radiantly.

The poor knight of the stick put his hand upon his heart, where, at that moment, a heavy load seemed to rest.

"I'm afraid it's no joke to me," said Max, laughing.

"But give me some guesses, as the children say."

"No, I can not."

"Not for a dress?"

"I can not answer."

"What is it for—do tell me."

"You quoted the children just now," Alice said, laughing too, "well, I will answer as the children do—it is for laroos to catch meddlers, cousin Max."

"Oh, how unfriendly you are, cousin."

"Unfriendly?" said the young girl, softly.

"Yes; you will not tell me; let me think!"

Max glanced round, and his eyes fell on Mr. Emberton. That gentleman was clad in black—plain and elegant, though rather dandified—the only exception being his waistcoat, which was a bright scarlet, in the latest mode.

"Your silk is for a waistcoat, cousin Alice," said Max, his merriment suddenly changing to mortification and gloom.

Alice blushed and looked furtively at her cousin; and without thinking, said:

"How could you guess?"

"It is for a waistcoat, then?" asked Max, in a mortified tone.

"Yes, cousin Max," said Alice, in a low voice.

Max gently bowed his head, making no reply; then he turned away without heeding the hurt and embarrassed expression on Alice's lovely face, for she had with those

jealous eyes of hers, noted his mortified tone and sudden gloom. Nothing could be more lovely than the young girl's face at the moment.

The knight before mentioned heaved a sigh so piteous and profound, that "it did seem to shatter all his bulk." He was afterward heard to declare, that he would win that young lady for his bride, or perish in the attempt.

The whole party left Mr. Barlow's, and once more entered their sleighs—Mr. Robert Emberton and Max exchanging moody glances, Alice and Caroline scarce knowing what to think.

A ride of a hundred yards brought them to the jeweler's.

The jeweler's was not less brilliantly decked out than Mr. Barlow's; or rather it as much exceeded in splendor that more useful establishment, as rich gold and silver vessels, and rings, and breastpins, and bracelets exceed the brightest silks, and the most richly woven cloths.

The shopman here seemed to be not less gallant than that unfortunate knight at Mr. Barlow's. He had the eyes of Argus and the hands of Briareus; but to set off these attractions, he was as huge as the giant Enceladus, and as ugly as Irus, the poorest of the Greeks. He had long ago cast his eyes on Alice, that bright saint so far above him; not matrimonially;—he never dreamed of that; but with the despairing adoration of a Chaldean priest, pouring forth his love and worship for some bright particular star glittering in the far golden Orient.

But it will not be necessary for the purposes of our tale, to dwell upon the private feelings of this gentleman. We will, however, add, before dismissing him and his passion, that the mysterious affair which soon after convulsed the borough with curiosity and dreadfulest suspense, was owing to the fact that he and the knight at Mr. Barlow's had come to a mutual knowledge of each other's feelings. A bloody duel was anticipated, and every number of the "Martinsburg Gazette" was care-

fully scanned by the breathless community—the editor of that paper having acquired a high reputation for skill in getting at the “latest news” of every description. The whole affair, however, was finally ended by a “correspondence” in that paper—in which the friends of the two parties, over their signatures, “were gratified to inform the public that the misunderstanding, etc., etc., had been amicably arranged in a manner satisfactory to both gentlemen”—after which the subject was dismissed, and no longer afforded a topic for tea-table gossip.

But we digress;—the young gentlemen and their fair companions made their purchases duly—the ladies not looking at the gentlemen, the gentlemen not looking at the ladies. But the unfortunate comedy, of which we have carefully traced a number of scenes, had not yet run its full complement of nights, or rather days.

Max bought an elegant bracelet.

“It is for sister;” said Alice to herself, “she has one on her arm which just matches it.”

And Alice looked very low-spirited.

Mr. Emberton purchased a very pretty pair of ear-rings.

“They are for Alice;” said Caroline to herself, with a most engaging pout, “I know they are; she said the other day, and he heard her, that she was about to bore her ears. Mr. Emberton might have accomplished that painful object without buying ear-rings for her.”

And Caroline sighed.

Then, the jewels being carefully wrapped in their snowy cotton wrappings and put away securely in their small boxes, the party once more commenced their rounds. Early in the afternoon their purchases were completed, and with the merry jingle of those never-quiet bells the sleighs fled back toward the mountains.

This time Max and Caroline were in advance

CHAPTER XXII.

THE UPSET.

THEY approached the steep side of the North Mountain, whose ten thousand stalwart pines bent down beneath the heavy snow-burden resting on their branches; and commenced the ascent, lost in admiration of the scene, so still, so desolate, but so replete with beauty.

The top of the mountain was reached, and behind them the entire valley from east to west—from the Blue Ridge to the spot which they had now reached—was visible. They gazed for a moment on the snow-clad Lowlands, followed pensively the light curling wreaths of smoke with admiring eyes; then with the ever-merry tinkling of the bells went rapidly down the western slope toward the Third Hill Mountain and the little valley it embraced in its shaggy snow-clad arms.

"It is near sunset," said Alice, "and we have some way to go yet, Mr. Emberton. How much time we have lost."

"I can but felicitate myself."

"For what reason?"

"I have had so much more of your society," said Mr. Emberton tranquilly, in a matter-of-course tone.

"You seem in a complimentary humor."

"I am, my dear Miss Alice," replied Mr. Emberton, yawning, "the fact is, I am this evening in quite excellent spirits; are not you?"

"Not unusually," replied Alice.

"Are you uncomfortable? I am afraid you are not wrapped up as well as Miss Caroline, who has for her cavalier a much more elegant man than myself."

"Which means," replied Alice, "that I am expected to say that such is not the fact."

"No, no, my dear Miss Alice; these little conventionalities may suit ordinary young gentlemen very well; but not me. I am indifferent wholly to all that. In fact I'm—exhausted; I would say *blasé*, but for the undeserved contempt into which that expressive word has fallen. No, no—on my honor, I had no intention of fishing for a compliment. I meant simply to say, that considering riding out a bore except with a few of my lady friends, and consequently being somewhat unused to it, I had probably neglected to wrap you up securely from the cold."

"I am plenty warm, thank you—except my hands, which I have in the hurry unaccountably neglected. They *are* cold; but I will get my gloves out of my reticule."

In performing this manœuvre, Alice also drew from the reticule with the gloves, a piece of paper, which fell open upon the bear-skin before Mr. Emberton's eyes. This paper contained some verses, and—what was more unusual—a rose bud had been wrapped in it.

"Poetry, by Jove!" said Mr. Emberton. "Excuse me, Miss Alice, that shocking expression will escape me in spite of my most careful attention. But who wrote these verses—pardon me for having already unconsciously read a portion of the first."

Alice looked annoyed; then indifferent

"They were written by cousin Max," she said, "and I have no objection to your seeing them, as you have already read a part."

"It was unconscious, I assure you."

"Unconscious indeed!"

"Purely," said Mr. Emberton, taking the paper and reading the verses with a languid expression:

"The sunset died
In regal pomp and pride—"

purely unconscious, I assure you, Miss Alice, and did you know my utter indifference to poetry in general, you would at once admit my excuse. My eyes fell upon the

page without any intention on my part of reading what was thereon written. MS. is such a bore."

Alice had already restored the rose bud to her reticule—feeling some dread of Mr. Emberton's bantering. That gentleman, however, either had not seen it, or did not think it worth his while to take notice of the fact.

He continued reading the verses :

"The sunset died
In regal pomp and pride;
I should have died
Before I left my mountain side."

pretty, but the accent is not indicated by italicizing the 'I';—you will observe the author's meaning is, that he, like the sunset, should have shuffled off this mortal coil before leaving the mountain side!"

"You are very critical."

"By no means. I am in an excellent humor—which is very natural, since our sleigh is making good time. Rapid motion always invigorates me—except the waltz, which is an awful bore—dreadful."

"We are going very rapidly."

"Yes, Miss Alice; and the bells; nice music, eh?"

"I like it very much."

"Then Selim knows his points; a spanker, is he not?"

"I don't know what you mean by a 'spanker,'" said Alice, tranquilly, "but he is well broken to the harness."

"You are fond of sleighing, Miss Alice?"

"Exceedingly."

"Yes?"

And after this compendious monosyllable, Mr. Emberton fixing his reins securely in one hand, betook himself again to reading Max's verses.

He had just reached the lines,

"The trees were dyed
In evening's crimson tide,
Rolled far and wide
Along the merry mountain side"

when an exclamation of affright from Alice made him drop the paper, and grasp suddenly the loose rein he had allowed to slack too much.

The cause of the young girl's exclamation was apparent. Max and Caroline in passing over the ice, now rendered unsafe by the gradual thawing it had throughout the day been subjected to, had almost broken through the bending crust, near the very centre of the stream. They were now plainly visible on a little knoll beyond, making signs to the second sleigh not to cross at the same spot.

It was too late. Mr. Emberton's horse thundered down the bank and rushed upon the smooth surface. The consequence was that the animal's forelegs broke through the ice, and the sleigh was in a moment nearly submerged. Max whirled his horse round and hurried back to the rescue of the party, just as Mr. Emberton, by a violent blow of his whip, forced his horse, the sleigh, and all through the icy water, and the broken ice, to the bank.

Caroline received the trembling Alice in her arms, turning pale at her sister's narrow escape. Had the water been deeper, a most serious accident might have been the consequence.

"Oh, Alice!" cried Caroline, wiping her eyes.

"I'm not hurt, sister," rejoined Alice, recovering her lost color.

"Are you sure?"

"Yes."

"And you, Mr. Emberton?" said Caroline, turning round suddenly to that gentleman, who was almost covered with ice.

"Thank you," said Mr. Emberton, "perfectly sound—arrived safe. My luck was always execrable, you know."

"We made signs, sir," said Max, austere, "you might have seen them."

"I did not, sir."

"You might have seriously injured Miss Courtlandt, sir."

Mr. Emberton's eye flashed at the haughty tone of the young man's voice.

"Miss Courtlandt was under my charge, sir," he replied, endeavoring to assume his habitual coolness.

"I beg that you will have more care when such shall be the case in future, sir," said Max, indignant at Mr. Emberton's coolness and indifference.

Mr. Emberton, by a powerful effort, suppressed the angry reply which rose to his lips, and said satirically:

"You are I suppose, Miss Alice's knight as well as Miss Caroline's, and I have no right to quarrel with you. But I would respectfully suggest that you were partly the occasion of our accident."

"I, sir!"

"Certainly: but for being busily engaged reading some agreeable verses of yours, I should doubtless have seen the signs which were used, it seems, in such profusion to warn me."

Alice blushed, and looked at Max timidly.

"I do not understand you, sir," said the young man, coldly.

"He was reading your verses, 'The Mountain-side,' cousin Max," said Alice, softly, "they happened to—"

"Is it possible you allowed them to be made a laughing stock in your presence, cousin Alice," said Max, in a tone of profound mortification, "and by Mr. Emberton? Cousin Alice!"

Alice opened her lips to refute this charge on the young man's part; but Mr. Emberton interrupted her.

"A laughing stock, sir?" he said, "by no means! I was admiring the said verses, and really was not bored more than I am usually by poetry; I think I may venture to say even less than usual. I particularly admired one of the stanzas which I chanced to read just as I went beneath the ice—devilish cold day for a bath; excuse me ladies! I was reading your verses very attentively when

our accident happened, and to prove to you that they made a deep impression on me, I will repeat the lines in question. They were

‘The trees were dyed
In evening’s crimson tide,
Rolled far and wide
Along the merry mountain side!’

Fine verses, expressive verses: very expressive! For you will observe that not only the sunset but Miss Alice and myself were very nearly:

‘Rolled far and wide
Along the merry mountain side.’

And that reminds me that my arm hurts like thunder; really ladies I shall never break myself of this dreadful habit. Pardon, pardon!”

Mr. Emberton having achieved this explanation, which served the double purpose of affording him a safety valve for his satirical humor, and of turning the whole affair into a jest, carefully wrapped his companion’s feet in the warm bear-skin, and touching his panting and foaming animal with the whip, again set forward toward the Parsonage beyond the mountain.

They arrived without further accident, just as the last light of sunset fading away like a rosy blush before the approach of night, waned slowly from the western sky; and to Mr. Emberton’s great satisfaction and delight, the young ladies made quite a jest of the accident. In truth Alice had scarcely received a wetting, wrapped as she had been in her thick bear-skin; Mr. Emberton, on the contrary, had had his arm badly bruised by the concussion with the ice.

They took leave of the family now—both the young men—and Max was about to get into his sleigh when he felt a finger on his shoulder.

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE RIVALS.

THE young man turned quickly and found the eyes of Mr. Robert Emberton fixed upon him. Mr. Emberton's countenance had entirely lost its habitual languor, and was characterized by an unmistakable bad humor.

"You spoke to me very roughly a little while ago, sir," he said, "and in a manner not at all to my taste. Gentlemen are not in the habit of using such language toward each other here, whatever may be the case elsewhere."

Max drew himself up haughtily.

"I had the right to say what I did, sir," he replied, "and if any thing I think I was forbearing—very forbearing."

"I do not agree with you, sir."

These words were uttered in a tone so cold and so full of insult that the young man's face flushed.

"Mr. Emberton!" he said advancing a step toward his adversary.

"Well, sir!"

"What do you purpose, will you be good enough to inform me?"

"Yes, sir; I will."

"You touched my shoulder I believe, as I was getting into my sleigh," said Max, haughtily.

"I did, sir," replied Mr. Emberton, "and my purpose was to say to you that your demeanor to me to-day has been such as I shall not pardon."

Max's eye flashed;

"As you please, sir!" he said.

Mr. Emberton looked at his adversary with a scornful curl of his proud lip; and after a moment's silence said :

“I could pardon your incessant attempts to render my visits here disagreeable, sir—I could pardon these attempts on your part if—”

“What do you mean, sir—I confess I am at a loss to comprehend you,” replied Max, coldly.

“Attempts,” continued Mr. Emberton with great bitterness in his tone, “in which I confess you have been at times very successful. To-day for instance.”

“I do not understand you, sir.”

“I will not explain my meaning then, sir. If the lady threw no obstacle in the way—and permit me to say that I do not imagine any such state of things to exist, after the mortifying experience I have had of my standing with her this day in town yonder—if the lady threw no obstacles in your path when your purpose in coming hither was to render my presence ridiculous, then I have no reason to complain of her; so much the worse for me. That is not my cause of quarrel with you, sir: my reason for stopping you just now was to say to you, that this day you have openly insulted a gentleman who has never stood in your path, though you have frequently stood in his own, and to assure you further that he has no intention of pardoning that insult!”

These words were uttered with great bitterness; Mr. Emberton was plainly thinking of Caroline's preference in Martinsburg, of his rival over himself.

Max caught at the last words uttered by his adversary, and replied with equal bitterness :

“A gentleman who has never stood in my path!”

“Never, sir.”

“I know not whether this is irony or not, sir; but if not irony it certainly resembles it. You make yourself out a veritable saint, sir—the Chevalier without reproach.

You have not laughed to-day at my cousin's preference of yourself to me in Martinsburg—by no means!" said the young man, bitterly, "you have not made merry with my verses, turning the expression of my grief at leaving my native land into a jest—not at all! By heaven! Mr. Emberton, you shall repent what you have said this day before you are an hour older!"

Max overcome with rage, advanced two steps toward his adversary, looking at him with burning and flashing eyes.

Mr. Emberton by a powerful effort controlled himself.

"I did not laugh at your verses, sir," he replied, "they were wholly indifferent to me—wholly. I remember nothing of them; but I do remember your language to me."

Max suppressed his anger, and said with as much coldness as he could command:

"I have nothing to retract, sir."

"You have insulted me, sir!" said Mr. Emberton, again giving way to one of his pale rages.

"I have nothing to explain, sir."

"I do not ask you to explain, sir," said Mr. Emberton, "there are things which you could not undo by an explanation;—and I don't care to tell you, sir, that but for those things, I should have passed over this insulting language to-day."

"You seem fond of riddles, sir," said Max.

"I am not deceived by your pretense of not understanding me."

"My pretense, sir!"

"Your pretense—yes, a thousand times your pretense! You not only make me ridiculous, but you pretend not to know it."

"Ridiculous, sir? your riddles are deeper and deeper."

Mr. Emberton dug his nails into the palms of his hands; as for Max he had nearly bitten through his upper lip. The forms of the young girls were already seen flitting

by the window toward the door, to ascertain the cause of the delay of their cavaliers, in taking their departure.

Mr. Emberton advanced close to Max.

"There is one word which I will make plain to you, sir," he said, "there shall be no riddle in it, I promise you."

Max replied haughtily :

"Very well, sir."

"I will commission a friend to say it to you," said Mr. Emberton, "you might not understand me and my riddles !"

After these bitter words, Mr. Emberton made Max a low bow, which was returned as ceremoniously, and both got into their sleighs just as Caroline and Alice appeared at the door. Mr. Emberton saluted them with some constraint but a tolerable imitation of his usual sweetness, and drove off in the direction of the Glades.

Max took his way to the Lock, overwhelmed with bitter thought. Alice was lost to him ! that day's events had proved it ! How fond and foolish he had been to dream of her ! And then came the thought of Mr. Robert Emberton in connection with Alice—both laughing at his verses. Max ground his teeth.

CHAPTER XXIV.

MONSIEUR PANTOUFLE'S "OLD INSTINCT."

ON the morning after the scenes we have just related, Doctor Courtlandt was sitting in the breakfast-room before breakfast, perusing a letter which had just been brought to him from the post-office, when Monsieur Pantoufle made his appearance, shaking from his slippers and shoe-buckles, the snow which those ornamental rather than useful articles of dress had gathered, in their passage from the owner's horse to the mansion.

At Monsieur Pantoufle's entrance, Doctor Courtlandt felt an undefinable sensation, such as men usually experience when persons come to pay something more than a mere friendly or formal visit. This may perhaps be explained on the ground of the Doctor's almost instinctive comprehension of every thing which in the remotest degree related to his son. Max had returned on the previous evening gloomy and silent, and had retired earlier than was his wont, overcome it seemed by some afflicting emotion. Doctor Courtlandt had taxed his brain to account for this gloom of the young man's; had run over in his mind the events of the day before—Max's visit, his meeting with Mr. Robert Emberton, for the sleigh ride had been arranged some days before, and he knew Mr. Emberton was to be of the party, his delight on setting out in the morning, his gloom on returning at night. The Doctor had been completely puzzled; but now a sudden light seemed to flash upon him; the very moment Monsieur Pantoufle, after making his customary bow, asked in a ceremonious tone for Max, he began to understand.

"He has not come down," said the Doctor, "take a seat, Monsieur Pantoufle."

"I thank you, Monsieur," replied Monsieur Pantoufle, politely.

"Do you wish especially to see my son, Monsisur Pantoufle?" asked the Doctor.

"Particularly."

"Will I not answer your purpose?"

"I have much sorrow in saying no, Monsieur."

"And why?"

"'Tis a private matter."

The Doctor rose and approached the music-master.

"I see a note there in your waistcoat pocket, Monsieur Pantoufle," he said, "pray is that for Max? I know it is."

Monsieur Pantoufle looked somewhat confused.

"You say rightly," he replied.

"What does it mean?"

"I feel not at liberty to indicate, Monsieur Max."

The Doctor frowned.

"I represent my son, Monsieur Pantoufle," he said, "speak!"

"Impossible!" said the music-master, with a deprecatory wave of his hand, "impossible, Monsieur!"

"Monsieur Pantoufle, that is a challenge!" cried the Doctor, suddenly.

The dancing-master shrugged his shoulders, taking out the note.

"You have reason, sir," he said smiling, and handing it to the Doctor, "since you have guess it, why there result no harm in giving it to you."

"A challenge from whom, pray, in God's name!" cried the Doctor, much moved and grasping the note tightly.

"From young Monsieur Emberton."

"Robert Emberton!"

"Himself, Monsieur," said Monsieur Pantoufle, laconically.

The Doctor looked at the music-master angrily.

"And you are his second?"

"I have that honor."

"Permit me to say, Monsieur Pantoufle," the Doctor replied, with a scornful curl of the lip, "that it is no honor!"

"You speak harsh words, Monsieur Max."

"Not at all, sir. I have no intention of exposing myself to a similar compliment from you, Monsieur Pantoufle—you are so excellent a hand at the short sword."

But seeing on Monsieur Pantoufle's wan old face a hurt expression at these sneering words, the Doctor added:

"I do not wish to wound your feelings, sir, but you must permit me to say, that I think you are too old a man to lend yourself thus to the silly freaks of a hot-headed youth. In Heaven's name, why should Mr. Robert Emberton take it into his head to send a defiance to my son of all the persons in the world!"

"He says that insult pass."

"Folly!"

"He must have satisfaction, he says," continued Monsieur Pantoufle, shrugging his shoulders.

"Satisfaction!" repeated the Doctor, "it really is astonishing how hot these foolish heads of young men continue to be. A defiance, by heaven, to the son of one who will soon—but that is not your affair, nor Mr. Robert Emberton's."

"Eh?" said Monsieur Pantoufle, interrogatively.

"Nothing," said the Doctor, stiffly, "let us come back to your message. You are Mr. Emberton's second."

"As I was yours, Monsieur Max," said Monsieur Pantoufle, with a sly laugh.

"Do not bring up the follies of my youth as an apology for those of other persons, Monsieur," said the Doctor. "If I was foolish enough to challenge Mr. Lyttelton and his friend, or his enemy, it is no excuse for you."

"You hurt me, Monsieur Max," said the old man, feelingly.

"I have no such intention, my old friend. But this duel I tell you, Monsieur Pantoufle, can never take place. You will go back nevertheless, and tell Mr. Emberton that your message was delivered—the rest is my affair."

"Willingly, Monsieur Max," replied the old man, "I meddle in this *affaire* against my wishes; but the old instinct, the old instinct, you know, Monsieur Max!"

And shaking his head, the old man slowly took his departure, alleging that he had already breakfasted.

The Doctor remained alone looking at the note. Max entered ten minutes after Monsieur Pantoufle's departure; his father had already formed his resolution.

CHAPTER XXV.

STRATEGY : AND A WARLIKE PROCLAMATION.

MAX was still gloomy and taciturn—his heart lacerated, his eyes red and heavy with want of sleep. He had been revolving all through the long wretched hours of the weary night the events of the day before ; and he could come to but one conclusion, to but one opinion of his cousin's feelings. She had openly preferred Mr. Ember-ton in purchasing her presents—she had manifested throughout the day her satisfaction at being thrown with that gentleman instead of with himself, she had consummated her mortifying neglect and indifference toward himself by something worse than all. She had made those sincere and tearful verses he had given her, a jest, a subject for merriment and laughter, and with whom ? That bitterly detested rival ! The young man felt his heart becoming sour and acrid, and the change forbode no good to that rival, so successful.

Doctor Courtlandt slipped the note brought by Monsieur Pantoufle into his pocket, and said with a smile to his son :

“ Good-morning, Max ! how goes it to-day.”

“ I feel dull, sir.”

“ Come, come ! cheer up. If you look so badly I shall never be willing to trust you with the commission I am about to.”

“ What is that, sir ?” said the young man, gloomily.

“ See this letter.”

Max took it. It bore the New York post mark, and was directed in a large commercial hand.

“ Your books, sir ?”

"Yes, they have arrived, and I am very anxious to get them on."

Max made no reply

"I am afraid to trust them to the cars without some one to take care of them," continued Doctor Courtlandt.

"Some one, sir?" repeated Max.

"And I can not go myself," finished the Doctor.

Max raised his heavy eyes to his father and said gloomily:

"You must excuse me, sir; I really can not go. I am kept here."

Doctor Courtlandt looked hurt, and was silent.

"I mean, my dear father," Max said, tremulously, "that I am not fit for the commission—besides I really am kept here."

The Doctor was silent still.

There was nothing so fearful to the young man in the whole universe as his father's displeasure. And for the very simple reason that this displeasure was never manifested harshly, in word or tone, did Max on this occasion feel an instinctive dread of that obstinate silence with which the Doctor had met his excuses.

"Could no one else go, sir?" asked he, in a low tone.

"I do not wish you to do what is distasteful to you, my son," said the Doctor, turning away.

"Distasteful! oh, sir, I would cut off my hand if you wished me to. Could you doubt it!"

"I do not ask so much."

"Father—"

"Enough, my son—if you do not wish to go to New York—"

"I will go," murmured Max, "I did not mean to refuse to go, sir."

"That is my brave boy," said the Doctor, cheerfully, "why the trip will do you good. You are looking a little pale, and this renders the haste I am in to get my valu-

able library, and the consequent hurry you must be in, somewhat disagreeable."

"Are you in haste, sir?"

"To receive them? Yes. They may be damaged lying in the Custom-house."

"Command me, sir."

"Well—then I command you," replied the Doctor with his fond smile, and looking with his large tender eyes so full of majesty and profound affection, at his son, "I command you to go and pack up your valise to take the afternoon train—"

"To-day, sir!"

"Have you not time to reach Martinsburg? It is scarcely nine o'clock."

Max saw from his father's tone that any further opposition would be distasteful to him, and with a sound between a sigh and a moan, he replied:

"Well, sir—I will go to-day then. I ask only a few moments to write a line which I will trouble you to have delivered to-day."

"Certainly—certainly," said Doctor Courtlandt, "go at once and write."

Max went to his chamber and sat down at his writing desk. That "line" was to be written for the eyes of Mr. Robert Emberton. After a moment's reflection, during which his face assumed an expression of coldness and gloom which would have much afflicted Doctor Courtlandt had he seen it, the young man wrote as follows:

"SIR—I write to say that I shall be unavoidably absent from Virginia for a week or more. This explanation of my sudden departure I am called upon to make after what passed yesterday. There was no possibility of mistaking your meaning on that occasion—and I now make you as ample amends for my departure as I am able to do, by accepting your challenge in advance. Permit me

to add that I disapprove of mortal combat on trifling grounds, and do not on this occasion consent to the meeting because any person—whether a lady or not—would ridicule me in the event of my refusal. I believe I should have enough of independence to meet the eyes of the whole world and return them their scornful laugh, did I choose to refuse an encounter of this description. No, sir; believe me, young as I am, I should never be moved by such *opinion*, whether it were the scorn of men, or that more dreadful thing the contemptuous pity of women. I meet you willingly because you have placed yourself in my way, and because I hate you. There is an honest word—if it is not very Christian.

“I handle the sword well, and for that reason waive the choice of weapons. The choice lies with yourself. But all arrangements will necessarily await my return.

“I have the honor to be your obedient servant,

“M. COURTLANDT.

— “*Wednesday Morning, Dec. —, 18—*”

Having penned this warlike epistle, the young man neatly folded it, and sealed it—to omit nothing—with the old Courtlandt coat of arms, venerable relic of antediluvian Courtlandts, dead and gone many a day, after doing many things of a description very similar, and equally as unchristian as that just performed by their descendant; then directing it succinctly to “Mr. Robert Emberton, at the Glades,” he left it lying on his table; this done, he hastily packed up his traveling valise, took it under his arm and went down to his father.

Breakfast was a mere ceremony on the part of both father and son; and, in an hour, Max was pursuing his way through the deep snow to Martinsburg, there to take the cars for New York

CHAPTER XXVI.

DOCTOR COURTLANDT AND MR. ROBERT EMBERTON.

MAX had no sooner departed, than Doctor Courtlandt ordered his horse—preferring that conveyance to the more comfortable sleigh—and took his way toward the Glades, the note to Mr. Emberton in his pocket.

The Doctor's face betrayed much pain and anxiety. That kind and affectionate heart was liable at all times to be wounded through others, and now, when there was imminent danger of a mortal encounter between the person he was going to visit, and that other person most dear to him in the world—that world from which had passed successively so many who had been the light and joy of his existence—Doctor Courtlandt's heart was full of gloom and anxiety, and his brow overshadowed.

He was welcomed ceremoniously though with some embarrassment, by Mr. Robert Emberton, and so was ushered into the drawing-room.

"My sister is not at home, sir," said Mr. Emberton, striving to speak with his usual coolness and sang-froid, but finding it excessively difficult to return calmly the piercing glance of Doctor Courtlandt.

"Your sister?" said Doctor Courtlandt.

"Yes, sir; she is to-day out on a visit. I mention it because you generally call to see her rather than myself."

"That is true," said Doctor Courtlandt.

"I do not complain, sir," replied Mr. Robert Emberton, uneasily.

The Doctor looked at the young man long and fixedly. Mr. Emberton was much embarrassed by this acute look, and began to color.

"Is my presence disagreeable?" asked the Doctor, in a tone full of softness and courtesy.

"Disagreeable, sir! how could you think it?"

"You seemed put out."

The young man blushed.

"I am out of sorts to-day, sir," he replied, "you must excuse me."

"That is a polite speech; and I only find fault with it because it is not very sincere," replied Doctor Courtlandt.

"Not sincere, sir?"

"Not the whole truth, I mean."

The clear glance again flashed to Mr. Robert Emberton and embarrassed him.

"I am really out of sorts, as I said," he replied.

"That is not the only cause for your absence of spirits however—you who are generally so gay."

"Well, no, sir; it is not," said Mr. Emberton, in a formal tone.

"Therefore you did not tell the whole truth—though what you said was true. Mr. Emberton," said Doctor Courtlandt, rising and speaking in a noble and courteous tone, "I find myself playing at cross purposes with you—and I dislike cross purposes. I will therefore speak more plainly, and say to you that I know of the hostile message you have sent my son, and that I have been much pained by it; very much pained by it."

"It is not my fault, sir," Mr. Emberton replied, in a sombre voice.

"Still you sent it?"

"Mr. Courtlandt forced me to send it."

"Forced you!—he so gentle, so observant of all the courtesies of life?"

"I find no fault with his temper, sir, or his breeding; though I had a very disagreeable specimen of them yesterday."

"Max insult you!"

"Yes, sir ; an unmistakable insult."

"For what reason?"

"An accident I was so unfortunate as to meet with afforded him the occasion."

"On your ride?"

"Yes, sir."

The Doctor looked much pained.

"And you would kill him, or force him to kill you for a hasty word?"

Mr. Emberton bent his head gloomily, making no reply.

"Young man," said Doctor Courtlandt, "permit one who has passed through more vicissitudes than most men, and thus lived more than men do usually in forty years—permit me to tell you that the man who rashly takes human life, for a word, for a gesture, for a tone of the voice too high or too low to suit him, that man commits a most criminal and unchristian act. Your blood is hot with youth—curb it; your eyes fill with anger at the very glance of enmity—be calm! We live here but three score years and ten at best; is it worth while to bicker, and quarrel, and fight with your human brethren—your brother worms?"

"For honor—yes, sir!"

"Honor! grand trumpet blast preluding all the wars that have desolated the world! Honor, young sir, is a great and invaluable treasure—the Christian gentleman will guard it with his life. But this honor must be very frail if it is endangered by an ill-humored word!"

"I might have passed by Mr. Courtlandt's harsh words, sir," murmured the young man, gloomily, and applying to his particular case the general principle of his interlocutor, "but we are rivals! There is the word. It has torn my breast—it is out!"

Doctor Courtlandt looked inexpressibly pained, and pressed his hand upon his breast.

"Rivals!" he said mournfully.

"Yes, sir; there is the cause of this thing which you complain so of; not those trifling words he uttered."

"And you both love Alice?"

"Alice, sir!" exclaimed Mr. Robert Emberton.

"Yes," said the Doctor.

"Alice!" repeated Mr. Emberton, springing toward the Doctor, "does your son love Alice—not Caroline?"

The Doctor looked at the young man curiously.

"I think so," he said, "I never spy, under any circumstances; and I ask no confidences."

Mr. Emberton fell back gloomily, murmuring, "But Caroline loves him."

"There seems to be a misunderstanding here," said the Doctor, astonished, "and if you can not solve it, I can not."

"Could it be—" said Mr. Emberton, in profound thought.

"What?" asked Doctor Courtlandt.

"Could she all this time—"

"Who—what?" repeated the Doctor.

"Doctor Courtlandt," said Mr. Emberton, suddenly, "if you will be courteous enough to excuse me, I will take the liberty of leaving you for a short time. I trust you will pardon this very discourteous act—but I feel that this moment is the turning point of my life. It makes or mars me. There is my sister returning just in good time, and Monsieur Pantoufle who accompanied her. With your leave, sir, I shall expect to see you here on my return."

"Your return?" said the puzzled Doctor.

"Here is Josephine," said Mr. Emberton; and scarcely saying good-day to his sister, he left the hall, and ran to the stable. He saddled his horse in a moment, mounted and galloped at full speed toward the Parsonage.

In two hours Mr. Robert Emberton returned to the Glades overwhelmed with joy—almost ecstatic in his delight. He burst into the room where the three persons

he had left were assembled, and running to his sister saluted her with a hearty kiss.

"Do pray! what is the matter, Robert," said Miss Emberton, looking very pretty and good-humored.

"Behold one who will soon be a married man!" cried Mr. Robert Emberton, "a reformed Benedick, a most respectable individual of the married species, my dear Miss Josephine! You must excuse my extravagance, Doctor," continued the young man turning to Doctor Courtlandt, with some color, "but I am so completely happy that my habitual spirits have been exaggerated into boisterous hilarity. And in the first place please to consider the foolish note I wrote to—you know, sir—consider it burned."

"What note—to whom—and what in the world does all this mean?" cried Miss Emberton, amazed.

Explanation upon all points ensued, but with these explanations we will not trouble the reader; simply tracing the main events of the day.

Mr. Robert Emberton, first gaining Mrs. Courtlandt's consent, had with the bluntness of despair come directly to the point with Miss Caroline, and the result was precisely what the reader has no doubt anticipated. The cap was most assuredly for him, and Caroline for once lost her wit and humor, and did not talk brilliantly at all. But there is reason to suppose that her lover was not in the least displeased with this circumstance, but when she murmured, blushing radiantly, "My ear-rings! my ear-rings!" liked her all the better for her charming and novel confusion.

Doctor Courtlandt was sincerely pleased, and this satisfaction caused Mr. Robert Emberton very nearly to embrace that gentleman. After those thousand exhausting emotions the Doctor returned placidly home, thinking of his son who was borne every moment further from him. Was *he* to meet with such a happy issue too?

CHAPTER XXVII.

ALICE.

It was on a pleasant sunny morning toward Christmas that Max, having performed his father's business in New York, again returned to the Lock.

The young man was weary and exhausted, but more weary in heart than body. That ever present thought which he had carried away with him had paled his cheek, and filled his large blue eyes with settled abiding gloom. Never for an hour had the image of Alice left his heart—of Alice to whom he was now nothing—of Alice forever lost to him. He could have endured all the spites of fortune he thought, had this one arrow not been buried in his breast. He never knew how much he loved her until he had lost her, he now felt; never had his heart been so overcome, so absorbed by gloomy and despairing thoughts.

The sunshine, sparkling on the bright snow, was black—the sky, so clear and pure, was but a “pestilent congregation of vapors;” from all things the light and joy of life had passed and gone. No more love, no more happiness, never more lightness of the eye or heart. All that was over now.

The Doctor and Mrs. Courtlandt had driven over that morning to see Miss Emberton, a servant said, and would spend the day at the Glades. Max sat down motioning to the servant to leave him. That name had opened his wounds anew, and now hatred was added to his other mental excitement. That abhorred rival had for a time vanished from his mind—from his heart so overwhelmed with one thought, that Alice could not be his own;—she had preferred that man, she had slighted him, she had

laughed at his verses, had met with contemptuous calmness his love and affliction; it was on his despair that he had fed, not his hatred. Now the name of his rival aroused this new hell in him, and for a time he suffered a new torment of jealousy and rage.

All things, however, spend themselves in time—love, hatred, jealousy, despair;—otherwise the over-fraught heart would break. After an hour's gloomy silence the young man rose and looked around him wearily. Then he collected his thoughts; he would go at once and make arrangements for his meeting with Mr. Emberton; that at least should not be neglected or deferred.

He took from his pocket the bracelet he had selected for her, and looked at it long and in silence. A sigh which sounded like a sob, shook for a moment his breast and agitated his nervous lips.

"I will go and see her for the last time," he murmured, "yes, yes! I will go and feed on my own heart. Nothing worse than I have felt can touch me now!"

He mounted and set forward rapidly toward the Parsonage, as though he feared his own resolution. Covering his face with one hand he cast not a single glance upon any thing around him; he knew that however beautiful the fair sunlight might be, however grand the mountain heights, however calm the white silent landscape, they could bring no light, or calmness to his heart. Still these objects had their usual effect; he felt their influence spite of his incredulity. When he arrived at the Parsonage he was more subdued, and even found himself smiling mournfully at his own wretchedness.

On a mossy rock, which the snow had disappeared from, at the distance of two hundred yards from the house, Max saw Alice seated and busily engaged at some work. He dismounted, tied his bridle to a bough of one of the waving evergreens, and approached her. The young girl's back was turned to him, and so completely had the

soft snow muffled the hoof-strokes of his horse that she had not heard them, and was plainly not aware of his approach.

Alice was clad with her usual simplicity and taste, and was singing lowly to herself, while busily plying her needle. The song was thoughtful but very sweet and musical, and her pure clear voice, gave to it an inexpressible charm. Max thought that he had never seen a more angelic vision, a more radiant embodiment of purity, and youth, and innocence; the very sunlight seemed to linger on the beloved head, bent down so earnestly; and when the feeling words of her song floated to him like the low warble of a bird—those feeling words of Motherwell:

“Oh, dear, dear Jeannie Morrison,
Since we were sindered young,
I’ve never seen your face, nor heard
The music of your tongue—”

when Max caught the dying fall of the exquisite music, and the more exquisite words, his very heart was melted within him, and two large tears gathered in his eyes and rolled down his cheeks.

“Alice,” he said softly, “that is a pretty song.”

The young girl started, and turned round. A deep blush suffused her face at sight of her cousin, and she half rose.

“Do not mind me, cousin Alice,” said Max, passing his hand over his brow, “sit down.”

“I did not know you had returned,” said Alice in a low voice, and glancing timidly at the young man.

“I only got back an hour or two ago,” said Max.

Alice stole a pitying look at him.

“I am afraid you will be surprised to hear what has happened in your absence,” she murmured, with some agitation.

“What has happened?” echoed Max.

Alice turned away. Oh, how can I tell him, thought

she; he certainly loves Caroline, and her marriage will distress him dreadfully.

"You said something had happened, cousin Alice," said Max, pressing one hand on his throbbing heart, and with the other taking the hand of the young girl.

"Yes," murmured Alice.

Max's brow flushed, and his lips trembled.

"What mean you?" he said.

"It will distress you to hear it."

"I am used to distress," said the young man, raising his head with gloomy calmness, "it will prove no new guest with me."

Alice turned away with her eyes full of tears.

"How can I tell you?" she said, without looking at him.

Max felt his heart grow as chill as though it were surrounded suddenly by ice.

"Speak," he said, coldly.

But recollecting himself he turned away, and said in a low, suffocating voice:

"Do not mind me—speak; tell me all, as though I were an indifferent person. I can bear it—yes, yes; I can bear it."

For a moment his voice died away in his throat. He continued:

"I have borne much; I can bear this also, doubtless, though it goes near to tear my heart-strings—what I think, nay, know. Why conceal it now, Alice? 'tis a lost labor! Think you I saw nothing all these weary days—think you I could fail to see? But do not misunderstand me! I blame no one—no one! My wretchedness is of my own making. Why did I love so; why stake all my heart and life upon this chance!—to lose it!"

The young man's head sank down, and covering his face with his hands, he tried to strangle in its passage the passionate sob which shook his bosom.

"Cousin Max," said Alice, "I pity you from the bot-

tom of my heart. I can't tell you how distressed I am at your grief," she added, wiping away her tears.

Max turned away.

"Pity me!" he said, "you pity me—great God, she *pities me!*"

Alice looked startled.

"What do you mean, cousin?" she said, "indeed I do sincerely feel for you."

"Away with your pity!" said the young man, rising with bloodshot eyes. But sinking back he muttered:

"Forgive me, cousin; I am not well. Bear with me—my brain is hurt."

Alice took his hand with a radiant blush.

"I pitied you because I loved you," she said, in a faltering voice.

"Loved me?"

"Yes—loved you—very much; as my cousin," stammered Alice.

He turned away, and by a powerful effort controlled his agitation.

"You were speaking of what had happened in my absence," he said, in a low, gloomy tone, "tell me all."

"It will distress you."

"No—no."

"I fear it will."

"Speak, cousin Alice."

"You know we shall have a wedding here soon, then?" said Alice, calmly. "If you will make me speak, I must. You knew that?"

"I guessed as much," said Max, in the same low voice.

"All look forward to it soon."

"Do they?" said the young man, averting his face.

Alice thought she had overrated the affection Max felt for Caroline, so calmly were these words uttered; and this idea we are bound to say made her heart leap.

"It will be a very merry wedding, considering that

father is a minister," she said, with a laugh of affected cheerfulness.

"Will it?"

"It should be a happy time."

"Yes."

"Mr. Emberton has much improved already."

"Has he?" murmured the young man, his long hair vailing his face.

"And he is much more of a man than before."

"Is he?"

"Don't you think him intelligent? I do, cousin."

"Do you?"

"And handsome; is he not?"

"Very."

"Then he has a good heart."

"I suppose you think so."

"Indeed I do."

"Naturally."

"Why naturally of course, cousin," said Alice, "and I ought to assuredly."

"Assuredly."

"You speak very strangely, cousin," said Alice, blushing.

"I am sorry I displease you."

"Oh, you do not displease me—you displease *me*! Nobody thinks I am worth it. But really I am somewhat put out at Mr. Emberton's selection."

"Put out?"

"Yes; he is a man of taste.

"Of great taste."

"Of intelligence, too."

"Yes; of intelligence."

"Well," said Alice, attempting to laugh, "he should have exercised those qualities in his selection of a wife."

Max turned with gloomy astonishment toward his cousin.

"He has thought best, however, to mortify me by following his own judgment, in choosing—"

Max half rose.

"In choosing? What do you mean, Alice!"

"In choosing Caroline!" said Alice.

"Caroline!" cried Max.

"Of course."

"Caroline! not you!"

"Me, indeed; is it possible you thought all this time that I—"

Alice stopped, blushing deeply.

Max could hardly believe his ears; he looked around incredulous.

"Caroline!" he repeated.

"Yes—certainly—"

"Robert Emberton!"

"Certainly; they are to be married before New Year."

"Not you, Alice!" cried the young man, devouring her face with his passionate glances.

Alice blushed more deeply.

"How could you imagine such a thing?" she murmured.

"And that silk was not for Robert Emberton? That waistcoat!"

"Here it is. I have just sewn on the last button," said Alice, holding up the waistcoat, with a faint laugh, "I will not say who it is intended for, until you tell me for whom you bought the bracelet—it is not a gentleman's ornament, you know."

Max with radiant countenance drew out the bracelet and clasped it on her wrist.

"For you!" he said, "oh, heaven is my witness I would clasp my heart thus were it in my power!"

"Was it for me?" murmured Alice, smiling and blushing, with averted face.

"And the waistcoat!"

Alice blushed to the very roots of her hair ; and with a hesitating movement of the hand gave it to the young man.

“ Was it always intended for me ! ” said Max.

“ Always ! ” murmured Alice.

“ Alice, dear Alice,” said the young man overwhelmed with joy, “ I gave you more than that bracelet on your arm.”

“ More ? ” the girl murmured.

“ I gave you my heart. My heart, darling—do not take your hand away ! all my heart, my life, my being ! will you give *me* as much ? ”

That tender little hand remained in his, and no fine eloquent speech was needed to make him understand that the long train of errors was exploded, and the heart so faithful to him, his forever. The sunlight poured its joyful and most loving radiance on that fair picture—the maiden’s head on her true lover’s bosom.

The port was reached, his bark was safe from storms ; the anchor of his hope lay on his heart.

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CHAPTER XXVIII.

A BOUT WITH TONGUES.

MAX returned in the afternoon to the Lock, just as Doctor Courtlandt and his aunt drove up to the door, in their comfortable sleigh. The worthy Doctor was overjoyed to see his son looking so well, and welcomed him with great affection.

"When did you return, my boy," he said, "on my word, you are, it seems to me, in excellent spirits."

"I am, sir," said Max, with a smile.

"You found us absent; how have you passed the morning—riding out?"

"Yes, sir."

The Doctor's piercing eye detected some embarrassment in the young man's countenance; but not a very painful embarrassment.

"To the Parsonage?" he asked.

"Yes, sir," Max said.

"And whom did you see?"

"Every body, sir, but Caroline. Where is she to-day?"

"Riding out with Mr. Emberton," said Mrs. Courtlandt, "and I believe here they come."

In fact a sleigh at that moment made its appearance at the bottom of the knoll coming from the direction of Martinsburg. In this sleigh were seated Caroline and Mr. Emberton, laughing and talking.

"You have heard the news, I suppose, Max," said Mrs. Courtlandt.

"The news, aunt?"

"About Caroline and Robert Emberton. Since you have been away he has addressed her—"

"And—" began Max laughing.

"They are engaged."

"I knew it," said Max.

"Who told you?"

"Alice."

"Ah," said Doctor Courtlandt, with a sudden suspicion, and looking intently at the young man, "she told you, did she?"

"Yes, sir," Max said with a blush, avoiding the laughing eye of Doctor Courtlandt.

"Alice is making a very nice waistcoat for you, Max," said his aunt, "she has put a great deal of work on it."

Max was glad of this diversion.

"How did she get my measure, aunt?" he asked.

"I gave her one of yours to cut it by; on the very day you left us."

Max suddenly recollected that he had seen Alice on that day, from his elevated position on the Third Hill Mountain, leave the Parsonage and take the road to the Lock.

"It was very kind in her," he said, smiling.

The sleigh drove up to the door, and Mr. Emberton helped Caroline out.

"Oh, there's my elegant cousin, as I live!" cried the young girl.

"How d'ye do, cousin," said Max, going up and taking her hand.

"Come, don't be so formal," said Doctor Courtlandt, mischievously.

"He shan't kiss me."

"By your leave, mistress," said the young man, pressing his lips to her cheek, "that is good Shakspeare."

"And bad manners."

Mr. Emberton approached Max and courteously offered him his hand. That young gentleman returned the friendly grasp with great good feeling.

"I hope you will consider my note to you unwritten," said Mr. Emberton.

"What note?" said Max. "It seems to me that this observation should come from me. I regret the hasty words I wrote to you."

"What words?" said Mr. Emberton.

Doctor Courtlandt began to laugh; and taking the young men aside explained the whole matter.

"I am sure we are good friends now, however," said Max, laughing, "and I offer you my hand and my friendship. Take both."

"With all my heart."

And so these belligerent gentlemen sealed their newly agreed on amity by pressing each the other's hand. This dreadful matter was arranged to suit all parties; but we are bound to say that the bright eyes of the sisters had perfected this sudden friendship, as they had caused the former quarrel. Both Mr. Robert Emberton and Max were much too happy, to feel the least desire to drink each other's blood—a ceremony they had felt a violent desire to perform a week or two before.

They returned to the spot where Mrs. Courtlandt and Caroline stood talking.

"Have you seen your nice waistcoat, cousin Max?" said Caroline.

"Yes, my charming cousin."

"'Charming,' indeed! you are very witty all at once."

"Your presence inspired me."

"Yes; as it did just now to be very presuming, sir."

"What do you mean?"

"In kissing me!"

"Kissing goes by favor," said Max, laughing.

"If favor went by kissing *you* would never reach me."

"Why?"

"You are not a favorite with me," said Caroline, "which I think is a very good reason."

"Excellent; but you might tolerate my presence on one ground."

"What, pray?"

"My awkwardness is such an excellent foil to your grace."

"I have never heard a gentleman praise another, especially a lady, at his own expense, and thought him in earnest; mere irony, sir."

"*Ma foi!*" said Max, "there is no irony about it. You are a very elegant and charming young woman, I a very ordinary young man."

"Yes—you think so doubtless with your fine curls, and your nice mustache—to be!" added Caroline laughing and pointing at her cousin.

"Exactly," said Max, "old people always spy out the weak points in an inexperienced and unsophisticated youth."

"You won't dare to call me old, sir."

"No, no—did I not just now say that you were an excellent foil, with your thousand graces, to myself? Now if I am so elegant as you say, it necessarily follows that you are so much the more beautiful and graceful, since I am but a foil to you, mademoiselle."

"Foil! a fencing term."

"Yes, of some significance."

"What, pray?"

"It suggests riding caps."

"Oh, you have not forgotten my ill-luck—I have not lost sight of your want of gallantry."

"Forgotten it! no, you looked much too charming on that day with those beautiful flowing locks, my *belle* cousin, for me to possibly forget."

"Oh, a fine compliment!"

"I make you a present of it—free, gratis."

"I do not accept."

"It was in return, cousin Caroline."

"In return for what?"

"Your present to me."

"What present?"

"The present of yourself, when you ran forward and threw yourself into my arms—deign to recollect, if you please."

This repartee of Mr. Max caused Doctor Courtlandt, who well remembered the fencing scene we have related, to burst into a laugh and cry "bravo!" Caroline, for a moment discomfited, turned round and said to him:

"Uncle, you shall not take Max's part against me."

"Against you, my heart's delight!" cried Doctor Courtlandt, "never!"

"I knew you would not; you are such a nice old beau."

"Thank you."

"Besides I have quite as good a joke on you," said Caroline, with a merry and significant laugh which evidently startled the worthy Doctor.

"Humph!" he said, suspiciously.

"I have indeed."

"Bless my heart," said Doctor Courtlandt, "this is a most extraordinary young lady. But come, let us go in; no more wit-combats, no more clashing of foils and that sort of thing, my children."

"Nice old fellow!" said Caroline, lacing her arm round the Doctor's waist and leaning her head on his shoulder, "Aunt Courtlandt, did you ever see a more excellent and amiable old man; so handsome too, so much handsomer than Max! There's my hand; forgive me, cousin!"

Max took the hand, laughing.

"Oh, uncle," whispered Caroline, "somebody told me you were going to be married! Is it true?"

"Humph," said Doctor Courtlandt, and he led the way into the house.

CHAPTER XXIX.

THE WING OF THE ANGEL.

THE merry Christmas came; Christmas so full of rejoicing and gay-hearted laughter—which men looked forward to in the old time as to a blessed day of mingled joy and thanksgiving; which rose in every heart like an incarnate laugh—like a great snow-clad giant bearing on his stalwart shoulders all good cheer, as brawn, and mighty rounds of beef, and foaming tankards, and flagons full of ale and “sack and sugar” (no “fault” in any quantity)—and rolling from his bearded lip shaken with merriment, tidings of joy, and merry jests and quips; tidings of love and peace, and hopeful words for old and young, in cabin and in stately hall; and still again in every pause of the full-handed laughter, tidings of joy and love, tidings of love and peace!

The organs rolled aloft their blessed promise of the peaceful other world. The lips of young singing maidens uttered that promise in the pauses of the storm; the great music-storm which clashed and roared along the fretted roofs of mightiest cathedrals, drowning every sound but that low silent voice which ever floated in like some enchanting murmur, louder than thunder, stiller than the whisper of the lightest wind, the voice which soared, a divine harmony above the whole, and said to every heart—“Peace and good-will, peace and good-will, peace and good-will to all mankind!”

Children were merry every where, and old men glad. Relations gathered once more round the board at which they had sat, little boys and girls once; all were for the time quite other men and women than those scheming

ones, whom the great surges of the world had swept away from all their youth and innocence, to struggle in the sea of bitter thoughts, and never-ceasing yearnings and desires.

Christmas, in one word, once again had come to shower blessings on the earth; the poor cold earth, weary and very sick; and at his approach the snow-clad lowlands and the mountain land alike, smiled with new joy and youth.

At Doctor Courtlandt's hospitable board all his old neighbors who would leave their homes were assembled. Miss Emberton and her brother and Monsieur Pantoufle from the Glades were there; and Mr. and Mrs. Courtlandt from the Parsonage—the girls too—and even the old worn out hunter John had come, well wrapped up in furs, to welcome again, surrounded by his friends, the advent of the time.

Hunter John was very feeble and tottering; his sands of life were well-nigh run, and he seemed to see the hour plainly now was at hand when his old body must return to dust, and his soul to him who gave it.

They all took their seats round the hospitable board; and then commenced the merry laughter, and the friendly wishes for health and happiness, which those good honest people were accustomed to utter on such occasions. Caroline and Mr. Robert Emberton were very merry, and Mr. Emberton seemed all at once to have lost his unhappy feeling of ennui and lassitude; he was not heard to complain of being bored once during the whole day. Max and Alice, tranquilly happy, conversed with their eyes alone—that eloquent and most expressive language which needs no tongue to utter it. Doctor Courtlandt's intended marriage with Miss Emberton was now no secret, and the friendly voices round them, told them plainly that myriads of good wishes would accompany them to church.

Why should we attempt to catch those merry accents, trace those gayly uttered words, petrify here with a cold pen those bursts of laughter, circling and crossing round from side to side; why try to describe a Christmas dinner? All know the original; the portrait would find many critics. When the poor chronicler has told how they attacked the viands, and emptied willingly many full cups, how every moment laughter exploded in the air, and how the merry jest went round, or better still the health to absent friends;—when this is said, he has told all, and for his pains has written a few lifeless words. Much better leave the subject unattempted—leave the scene purely to the imagination.

Old hunter John looked on with cordial eyes, but very dim eyes; these merry sounds seemed to remind him of his youth, floating to him not from the real lips around him, but from the far land of dreams, and from those lips, cold now so long, so long! As he listened, all the past revived for him; the merry scenes; the border revelry of old; the life and joy of that old time dead long, long ago. He listened as in a dream; he heard again those joyous youthful voices; his youth returned to him, with its rubicund faces, and gay-dancing eyes, and jubilant jests and laughter.

The old man raised his feeble head, venerable with its gray locks now nearly blown away by the chill wind of age, and sought to erect his drooping shoulders. But overcome by weakness he sank down, his forehead on his arm, murmuring, “The arrows of the Almighty are within me; blessed be the name of the Lord.”

They raised him, and bore him in the midst of a great show of sympathy, to a chamber; a mist seemed to obscure his eyes, which he sought with a motion of the hand to dispel. Stretched comfortably on a soft bed, he revived however, and seemed to regain his strength, and would have risen.

Doctor Courtlandt forbade this, and advised him to remain quiet. The old man smiled, and shook his head.

"I believe you are right, neighbor," he said, "I'm goin'—most nigh given out. But tell 'em not to be uneasy on my 'count. I'm only mighty weak."

"You are no worse, my good old friend," the Doctor replied, "than you have often been of late. This was only a sudden weakness which you will get over. It was vertigo."

"Anan?" said hunter John.

"Your head was full of blood from the riding. You'll soon recover."

The old man smiled faintly.

"Well, Doctor," he said, "go down and cheer 'em up. 'Seems to me they ain't laughin'."

The Doctor after giving some directions went out, leaving Mrs. Courtlandt—a famous nurse, and one who delighted in doing all a nurse's offices—with him. Hunter John turned his face to the wall, and remained silent.

Suddenly he felt an arm round his neck. He turned, and a tear dropped on his old wan cheek.

"Alice!" he said.

The child—she was scarcely more—clung closer around his neck; and thus locked in a close embrace, the old man and his darling Alice, rested happily.

CHAPTER XXX.

THE HAND OF THE ANGEL.

CHRISTMAS passed away with its misletoe boughs to kiss under, and its stockings hung up for Saint Nic, and its Christmas trees shaken by chirping children. It had been a very merry Christmas in the mountain land, for none of the old adjuncts of the festive season had been wanting; the same joyous Yule it was which cheered those English hearts in cabin and in hall, in the fine open-hearted times of old. May it ever live a deathless legend, ever to be shaped in act with each recurring year;—may modern innovation never lay its cold prosaic hand on the true-hearted habitudes, so long the wont of our old ancestors, from the days of Arthur and the sage Merlin.

So Christmas, honored with high revelry and song, passed onward like a word of comfort, like a trumpet-blast of hope to fearful souls. The New Year marched in also, and passed onward blithe and joyous; crowned with some early flowers, and emptying, with laughing, youthful lips, great beakers to the time! Then the tender days of spring began to hint of their approach, though snow still covered the ground. Still hunter John was no better. He had been carefully removed to the Parsonage, after the scene we have briefly traced in the last chapter—but only to retire again to his bed, overcome with weakness. The old mountaineer was very ill, and soon all his old neighbors and friends flocked round him—their horses standing in a long row tied to the fence before the house. They assembled in the dining-room, shaking their heads and whispering—he was too old, they said, his life too feeble much longer to cling to him. Then one by one

they went into his chamber, and gave him cheerful, hearty words, and cheered him up, making a jest of his sickness. The spring was coming! they said, the spring would see him strong and well again.

The spring was coming truly; the cold winter waned away before the approach of vernal winds, unbinding the lowland and the mountain streams, and whispering to the little fearful flowers upon the grassy knolls to raise their heads and not be afraid. The spring said it would soon be coming, though other snow-storms might delay for a time its onward march. Soon it would marshal its bright crocuses, and primroses, and its tender violets and eglantine, and sending forward over the sunny hills its couriers to spy out the land, would give the signal with its merry winds, and make its inroad on the forces of the haughty winter-time.

Still hunter John remained very ill; still his old neighbors came to see him, cheering him with hopeful words. Alice and Caroline would never leave him;—those tender hearts were struck by the same blow which smote the grandfather. Alice would read to him often from the Bible, which was his favorite book—he could bear indeed to hear no other; and Caroline would hang upon his lips, ready to do his bidding. The young girls left scarcely any thing to Mr. Courtlandt and his wife.

And so the winter slowly passed away, and hunter John grew weaker.

His old neighbors now came oftener, and shook their heads and whispered more than ever; Doctor Courtlandt was never absent now, having taken up his residence very nearly at the Parsonage; his presence was a great relief, and a great hope to all—and never had the worthy Doctor so taxed his brain for what he had observed and learned; never had science so battled with the grim enemy who defied it.

And so the winter very nearly went away, and spring

grew every moment stronger and more gay. But winter rose up like a giant for the last struggle, and one morning the dwellers in the mountains found the earth again wrapped in snow.

The old hunter grew more faint and weak; the long day waned, and the sun slowly sloped to the red west.

With Mrs. Courtlandt on one side, the Doctor and his brother at the foot of the bed, and Alice and Caroline by his side—he had thrown his feeble arm around their necks—old hunter John rested quietly, gazing wistfully at his old stag hound stretched upon the floor, or looking through the window at the snow.

"I think I'm goin'," he murmured, "I think the Lord's a callin' me, children. Keep still, old Oscar," he continued, looking at the hound who had risen, "poor old fool! your master will never hunt any more upon the earth—never any more, old Oscar!"

"Oh, grandfather!" Alice sobbed, "don't talk so!—please don't!"

The old man smiled.

"I ain't complainin' darlin'," he said cheerfully but feebly, "you know I ain't complainin'. No, no! the Lord's mighty good to me—he's been mighty good to me these many long years—and he's a smilin' on me now when I'm most nigh gone."

He gazed through the window, dreamily; the sun was on the mountain top: and the shadow of the "Moss Rock" ran over the snow clad valley toward the Parsonage.

"The Lord's been merciful to me," murmured the old man. "I'm rememberin' the time now, when he turned aside my gun—I didn't cut down my little blossom, darlin'," he said turning to Mrs. Courtlandt, who was weeping, "the Lord was mighty good to me: glory and worship be his, evermore: Amen."

His thoughts then seemed to wander to times more deeply sunken in the past than that of the event his

words touched on. Waking he dreamed; and the large eyes melted or fired with a thousand memories which came flocking to him, bright and joyous, or mournful and sombre, but all now transmuted by his almost ecstasy to one glowing mass of purest gold. He saw now plainly much that had been dark to him before; the hand of God was in all, the providence of that great almighty being in every autumn leaf which whirled away!

Again, with a last lingering look his mental eyes surveyed that eventful border past, so full of glorious splendor, of battle shocks, and rude delights; so full of beloved eyes, now dim, and so radiant with those faces and those hearts now cold; again leaving the present and all around him, he lived for a moment in that grand and beauteous past, instinct for him with so much splendor and regret.

But his dim eyes returned suddenly to those much loved faces round him; and those tender hearts were overcome by the dim, shadowy look.

The sunset slowly waned away, and falling in red splendor on the old gray head, and storm-beaten brow, lingered there lovingly and cheerfully. The old hunter feebly smiled.

"You'll be good girls," he murmured wistfully, drawing his feeble arm more closely round the children's necks, "remember the old man, darlin's!"

Caroline pressed her lips to the cold hand, sobbing. Alice did not move her head which, buried in the counterpane, was shaken with passionate sobs.

The old man gazed wistfully on the little head, and gently smoothed down the curls with his rugged hand. Then he felt one of those strange sensations which dart through the mind at certain times, and have so singular an effect upon us. The old dying mountaineer was certain that he had *lived all this before*; those faces were around him in that identical arrangement, ages ago; Alice was sobbing there; his eyes were growing dim; he

had lain dying there as he now lay a century ago! It was so plain that heaven itself seemed to have plunged a beam of supernatural light into his heart, a beam which lit up all the mysterious hidden crypts of memory, revealing to him as he lay there on the border of two worlds, the secret of humanity! "Yes, yes!" he murmured, "she has cried for me before—I have died before—blessed Saviour you were mine before!" Then he became very calm; his eyes no longer wandered, but dwelt with looks of deep affection on those tender faces grouped around him, as he was about to fall into his last sleep on this earth; that sleep from which he must awake in another world.

The Doctor felt his pulse and turned with a mournful look to his brother. Then came those grand religious consolations which so smooth the pathway to the grave; he was ready—always—God be thanked, the old man said; he trusted in the Lord.

And so the sunset waned away, and with it the life and strength of the old storm-beaten mountaineer—so grand yet powerless, so near to death yet so very cheerful.

"I'm goin'," he murmured as the red orb touched the mountain, "I'm goin', my darlin's; I always loved you all, my children. Darlin', don't cry," he murmured feebly to Alice, whose heart was near breaking, "don't any of you cry for me."

The old dim eyes again dwelt tenderly on the loving faces, wet with tears and on those poor trembling lips. There came now to the aged face of the rude mountaineer, an expression of grandeur and majesty, which illumined the broad brow and eyes like a heavenly light. Then those eyes seemed to have found what they were seeking; and were abased. Their grandeur changed to humility, their light to shadow, their fire to softness and unspeakable love. The thin feeble hands, stretched out upon the cover were agitated slightly, the eyes moved slowly to the

window and thence returned to the dear faces weeping round the bed ; then whispering :

“The Lord is good to me ! he told me he was comin’ fore the night was here ; come ! come—Lord Jesus—come !” the old mountaineer fell back with a low sigh ; a sigh so low that the old sleeping hound, dreamed on.

The life strings parted without sound ; and hunter John, that so long loved and cherished soul, that old strong form which had been hardened in so many storms, that tender loving heart—ah, more than all, that grand and tender heart—had passed as calmly, as a little babe from the cold shadowy world to that other world ; the world, we trust, of light, and love, and joy.

The family fell on their knees sobbing, and weeping. The calm voice of Mr. Courtlandt—that calm tender voice which sounded like a benediction—rose in prayer for the soul which had thus passed ; and so the night came down upon them with shadowy wing, but could not take from them the light of hope. A silent voice whispered good tidings for their weary hearts, and in the very stillness of the dusky chamber was the calm promise of a brighter, grander world.

CHAPTER XXXI.

MONSIEUR PANTOUFLE.

OUR tale is nearly finished. That stalwart mountaineer, the living type of the old border past, having gone away to another world, what remains for the chronicler to say? His inspiration is dead, the history wound up, the hero has fought his last battle and succumbed to fate.

But we will trespass for a brief space still upon the reader's time, since those other personages who have entered into, and taken a prominent part in our history—whose claims to attention are based on the latter clause of the title of these pages—now demand a few words, in conclusion, at our hands.

The autumn following that spring whose near approach we have adverted to, saw three marriages in the mountains around Meadow Branch. Miss Emberton gave her hand willingly, most willingly, to the playmate of her youth—the noble heart whose image had never left her memory from first to last. With the bracelet in his hand the worthy Doctor had made his first approaches, and never did royal signet work so powerfully on some rebellious town, as that simple circlet of sandal-wood on the heart of its mistress. It had called up old scenes, fresh and radiant once more, with all the light and joy of youth; it had wakened memories slowly fading away into the dim past; it had, in a word, so strongly stirred that tender heart of the still girlish lady, that when the hero of those happy scenes of her youth laid siege more vigorously than ever to the town, the town surrendered. So they were married duly; and soon after Caroline and Alice pledged

their troth to Mr. Robert Emberton and Max, the details of whose courtships we have given very fully.

Monsieur Pantoufle was a welcome guest on these festive occasions, and the old man's face was a pleasure to the Doctor and his wife. He had given them dancing lessons in their childhood—now he saw them happily united, and rejoiced to see it.

“I shall give lesson in the dance to your children, Monsieur Max,” he said, playing with his old cocked hat and ruffles, “ah! you are very happy!”

“How, my old friend,” said the Doctor.

“You have good wife; whoever have good wife is happy.”

The old man sighed.

“Were you ever married, my good Monsieur Pantoufle?” asked the Doctor; “you speak very feelingly.”

The old man bent his head, and something like a tear glistened in his eye.

“Yes! yes!” he said.

“You seem grieved; pardon my thoughtlessness.”

“No; 'tis friendly. I had wife, I had—”

The old man paused.

“I had children,” he continued, in a trembling voice. “I lose them all on board ship—wreck coming from St. Domingo—you understand, Monsieur Max—all, all my little chicks.”

“Your children?”

“Yes; all, all! three little ones—and my poor wife. I have no heart, no home now!”

With these words two tears rolled down Monsieur Pantoufle's cheeks, and he turned away with a sob.

The Doctor went to him and took his hand.

“You must be lonely, my old friend,” he said, in his noble and courteous voice, “and my friends, especially the friends of my youth, who have ever cherished my memory and loved me, shall not want for any thing I can

furnish them. You must come and live with us here whenever you are not engaged giving lessons in Bath or Martinsburg. You are now growing very old, and you will find the country far more pleasant than the town. You can play your violin here, and be sure you will ever be welcome—most welcome.”

Monsieur Pantoufle raised his thin wistful face, and made the Doctor one of his old courtly bows.

“Too happy—you make me too happy, Monsieur Max,” he said, “I can not so trouble you, though; no.”

“I insist—you positively shall, my old friend,” said the Doctor.

Monsieur Pantoufle smiled and pressed his hat on his heart.

“Well, you make me ver happy, Monsieur Max,” he said, a hearty expression diffusing itself over his old face, “mos happy. Yes, yes; and no one but the old man shall teach the young Courtlandts to dance the minuet;—you recollect the good old minuet—or play the piano—ah! the harpsichord gone out of fashion! Who would have said when we fence together in old times, I should give my lesson to the second generation.”

Doctor Courtlandt laughed and took up a foil.

“Do you fence still?” he said.

“No, no—I am old, I am stiff; my hands grow white and weak—my ruffles are now of use, not for the looks only. My hand like a ghost’s!”

With which melancholy, but not bitter or complaining witicism, Monsieur Pantoufle, bowing with his old elegance, took his departure. The poor old man had now a home at last.

“Poor cousin of the Duke de Montmorenci! I will not abandon you in your age,” said the Doctor, thoughtfully smiling. “This world is a strange place—but what matters it? ’Tis all right in the end.”

CHAPTER XXXII.

NON OMNIS MORIAR.

THE sun was about to set on one of those fine evenings in the latter fall, those evenings which seem to blend together whatsoever is bright and youthful in the spring, all that is luxuriant in the mature and rich beauty of the flower-crowned summer, all that is thoughtful and full of melancholy attraction in the full golden-handed autumn.

The rich crimson light was rolled like a royal banner, stained with blood, down the rough side of the Sleepy Creek Mountain; and so across the little valley to the eastern pines, where it melted away into the fast gathering gloom.

The Moss Rock stood out against the sky like a giant's shoulder, and the tall pines growing at its feet, just fringed the outline of the lofty rock with flame—for they were kindled now by the red fires of sunset. Near the foot of the great rock on whose summit a gnarled fir tree still shook to the storms, or spread its rugged arms on summer days for little singing birds—on a round grassy knoll just under the shadow of the mass of rock, a newly made grave, with its white headstone, was settling into gloom.

On this stone a young girl, standing erect, was resting her arm, while her long hair falling down veiled her face, and hid the expression wholly. She had just planted some autumn flowers in the sod, and now she gazed at the round grassy knoll which defined the lofty form which rested below, with heaving bosom. Alice raised her head, and pushed back her hair from her face; her eyes were full

of tears, and she was mastered by one of those fits of sobbing, whose influence is so irresistible.

That tender heart was overcome by the sight of the grave of her dear grandfather—thus stumbled on in her walk—and she felt again all the bitter grief she had experienced on the day of his death. Again she saw the old forehead so thin and blanched; the feebly smiling lips; the tender eyes;—again she heard those loving and much-loved accents of the honest voice. Her head again sank down, veiled by the long sweeping hair, and she gave herself up to grief, weeping and sobbing bitterly.

A hand was laid upon her shoulder; and turning round she saw Doctor Courtlandt gazing tenderly upon her. So great had been her abstraction that she had not been conscious of his approach.

The Doctor took her hand and said in his soft noble voice, full of tenderness and sympathy:

“You seem much afflicted, my child—I do not think you heard my horse’s hoof-strokes.”

Alice bent down her head murmuring:

“Oh, he was so good—he loved me so—I can’t help crying, uncle—he loved me so!”

This broken, sobbing answer went to the strong man’s heart.

“Yes, yes,” he said, “I know you loved him, my child; I know it well, and you had reason. His was a true brave soul—a heart which fought manfully the life battle he was summoned to upon this earth; and when the bolt from heaven struck him down, he went to death in hope not fear—calmly and tranquilly. ’Tis fit you should love him, Alice.”

“He loved me so,” repeated the tender heart, sobbing and weeping, and bending over the stone, “and I loved him so dearly, uncle!”

“All loved him,” said the Doctor, smoothing the little head which nestled against his shoulder gently and ten-

derly, "and I do not blame you, darling, for lamenting him; no, no! 'twas a true brave soul—an honest heart which dwelt here with us for a time—which is now gone hence, we trust, to joy and glory!"

Alice replied with a deep sob: from her eyes, veiled with their long lashes, tears rolled down, and her lips were tremulous with agitation. The doctor soothed her gently; thoughtfully caressing the little head.

"This man who lies here now a mere clod, a memory, was dear to us," he said, his eyes wandering, it seemed, to other times, "most dear to many as a link of pure virgin gold which bound the present to the past. History will have no word to say of him; a mere borderer, he can not hope to live in the long drawn annals of the land, in battles, sieges, world-losing combats! No, this is not for him, 'tis true—no cloth of gold blazoned his deeds to men's wondering eyes; no shouts of the loud populace, clinging to his chariot wheels, rung to the sky in praise of his bold deeds. But a few years! and he will be a myth, a dream, a mere figure more or less misty of the doubtful past."

Those noble eyes grew dim and thoughtful; the words escaping from the lips of the speaker, were mere broken links of the chain of meditation.

"Yet he shall live in many a border tale," the Doctor murmured, "in many a chronicle of the old border past; he fought her battles, was a large part of the stirring life and deeds of those rugged times; he did his part like others—and his memory shall not wholly die into oblivion."

The Doctor's thoughtful brow was raised again; the young girl gazed silently on the grave.

"I have planted a flower there, uncle," she said, "it will soon bloom."

The Doctor, with a look of great affection, took the little hand, and gazing on the agitated face, bent down and pressed his lips to the disordered locks.

"I had forgotten, poor rude reasoner that I am," he said, "I had forgotten what was more than all—ah, far more consoling than these mournful consolations I have called up now. The soul which rests so calmly here cares nothing for the loud voice of history, for any cunning of the supple herald's art; what is it to him now whether he lives or dies in the mere annals of the land! He lives in loving hearts—he lies in peace after a long, rough life with many mourners: among them he would rejoice to find his child—you, darling. Your prayers and tears still follow him—your blessings sanctify his memory; could the cold spirit feel any thing, I know these tears would move him. He lives in most loving memories: grand consolation—may I have it on my dying bed!

"Many would say the wish is idle, but I should love to think my own grave was decked with flowers. The human soul clings to its habitudes of thought, whatever cold reason says; the hopes, the wishes, the aspirations of the soul run ever in the old well worn channels. I think that I should lie in peace if children came without fear to my grave, and flowers grew round it, perfuming the pure air, and symbolizing the grand beautiful heaven above! Is the wish vain and childish? Well, God has bid us grow like little children in our thoughts, and so I will not be ashamed of my instinct. Come, darling; the sun has set, and you should return. It is not fit that you should indulge so much your grief—though this was an eminent soul you weep for. He was, I am sure, prepared to die, and lived a long happy life—happy in many true hearts, all his own—happy in a good conscience, and a tranquil end. Thanks be to God for turning the strong man's heart to Him in these latter days; may he do as much for you and me and all!"

The Doctor put back the hair, and kissed the tender forehead which rested on his breast.

“We are all puppets, more or less, Alice,” he said, “and we can not grasp, with all our boasted powers, seemingly the most open and palpable significance of our human life. All is most wondrous—youth, manhood, age, the seasons, the growing trees, the grass; a divine mystery lies in them all, and ever escapes us. You are like a spring bud, I am in the mature summer of my life, the form which rests in peace there, after so many piled up years, so many tempests, was the snowy haired winter of man. Well is it for us if we come to that winter with so little soil upon our hearts—if we accept this human life, so mysterious and strange with the like child-like earnestness and trust. He was a brave true soul, a most honest heart—his epitaph is written in most loving memories !”

And kneeling down the Doctor wrote upon the tombstone of the old hunter :

“Thou shalt come to thy grave in a full age, like as a shock of corn cometh in, in his season.”

Then after a moment's thought he added those pious words of the Psalmist: “Blessed be the name of the Lord from this time forth, and forevermore.”

He felt an arm encircle his neck, the young girl's hair brushed against his forehead, and two tears from those tender eyes fell on the letters he had written. They turned and left the place.

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